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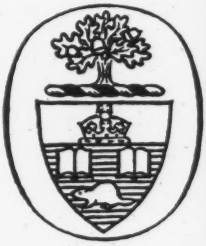

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MR. CHURCHILL AS JOURNALIST AND ESSAYIST

HERBERT L. STEWART

Where the Press is free and every man able to read, all is safe.

THOMAS JEFFERSON

Can it be maintained that a person of education can learn anything worth knowing from a penny paper? It may be said that people may learn what is said in parliament. Well, will that contribute to their education?

LORD SALISBURY

JOURNALISM has been called "a literary appetizer," the *hors d'œuvres* of a full literary meal. Its merit is to open rather than to complete inquiry, to be provocative of thought beyond all it has given. The essay, on the other hand, is—as the advertisement says about even a miniature flat—"self-contained." It is a small-scale treatise, presenting a complete picture, though in miniature.

In both these types of composition Mr. Churchill has contributed notably. *Step by Step* and *Great Contemporaries* may be taken to illustrate his talent in journalism and the essay at its best.

I

Regarding his earliest performance in journalism, the dispatches he wrote as correspondent of the *Morning Post* with the British army in the South African War (later published in the volume *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria*) it is enough to use the familiar formula of restricted commendation—"Good of their class, second class." The newspaper wanted vivid, detailed letters from the front, especially for those readers who had a husband, a son, or a sweetheart in the forces landed at Table Bay for active service; and these descriptive pieces, like those of a later volume, *The Malakand Field Force,* furnished the gossip of an eye-witness in such literary form as suited well the needs of the editorial office. There is an occasional, quickly suppressed, note of misgiving about the merits of the quarrel. Doubt is promptly argued away: the *Morning Post* would have sharply edited sceptical paragraphs as out of place in an organ echoing Joseph Chamberlain's summons "Learn to think imperially." But the young writer, who was himself thinking imperially, to the exclusion of all other types of thought, needed no such editorial censorship. Our interest now in

these dispatches lies in what they reveal of the beginnings of that power to watch, analyse, and interpret military movements which would, a quarter-century and a half-century later, yield the great histories of the First and Second World Wars. There was a vast development between *London to Ladysmith* and *The World Crisis* or *The Grand Alliance*. But the flair for examining tactics and strategy was present in the writer's earliest literary venture, and—as we read long ago in *Silas Marner*—"There must be many circulations of the sap before we detect the smallest sign of the bud."[1] A distinct advance in power, but still the same order of composition, was shown in Mr. Churchill's next work, *The River War*. There, however, he is an historian rather than a journalist, and it is with his journalism that I am here concerned.

This is seen to best advantage in the letters written every second week during the years 1936-9, and later collected in *Step by Step*. They are examples of journalism at its very best, containing a vivid, compact statement of essentials, satiric asides, startling similitudes, challenging dilemmas. Here are the products of an observer to whom the international sky was becoming continuously darker, and whose alarm was deepened by the ready popular reception of empty official reassurance. Would that they had served their purpose in time, rather than have now to be remorsefully remembered!

Conspicuous topics in *Step by Step* are the fast increasing peril of German rearmament, the urgency of "putting teeth" into the League of Nations, the illusion about relative strength (especially in the air) with which such leaders as Stanley Baldwin had soothed a British public when they ought to have alarmed it. Such challenging events as the German violation of treaty after treaty, the civil war in Spain, Mussolini's outrage upon Abyssinia, Jew and Arab at strife over Palestine, India's ominously developing nationalism, were pressed upon the attention of the British reader so dangerously languid in that last period of what has been well called "the Twenty Years' Truce." Perhaps in these miscellaneous essays, articles, newspaper columns from that ever active pen, as in the volumes of his collected speeches, the future historian will find a mirror of the time more revealing than Mr. Churchill's formal histories. It has been aptly said of Xenophon that his *Oeconomicus,* his little treatise on Athenian domestic management, reveals more than his *Hellenica*. Posterity's debt to *Step by Step,* to *Thoughts and Adventures,* to *Great Contemporaries,* will be like our debt to Pepys, Evelyn, and Greville. These

[1]George Eliot, *Silas Marner,* chap. VII.

occasional pieces may well be cited a hundred years hence by historians who make no mention of Mr. Churchill's *Marlborough.*

They are much more, too, than a mirror of the time. Not indeed in every estimate they ventured did later events show the critic's judgment to have been sound, but the percentage of now demonstrated accuracy is most impressive. Can we name another writer or speaker, of those constantly at work between 1936 and 1939, whose reputation could risk reissue of what he then continuously urged in writing or in speech? Most of them, I fear, would feel at such a prospect as the mature George Meredith felt at the report of a plan to collect and republish in a volume his own early articles written for the *Ipswich Journal.* Might all the curses in the commination service, he exclaimed, fall upon the "ghoul" who was thus planning to rake among literary ashes. Mr. Churchill's record, so far from losing, must gain for those who now read for the first time his *Arms and the Covenant* or his *Step by Step.* He must appear as the one leader who knew at a time of national apathy that a stimulant, not an opiate, was needed.

Journalism in England, as we now understand it, began with articles on political party strife, by Addison and Steele for the Whigs, Swift for the Tories, Defoe by turns (supposedly on hire) for each. From the first it was art of a high order. Those who deride the eighteenth century must acknowledge that in imagination, in brilliance of satire and caricature, in graceful, melodious English, the first quarter of that century brought, in its new enterprise of a periodical press, a memorable enrichment to English literature. Like Athena springing fully armed from the head of Zeus, journalism had at its beginning the service of mature, first-rate talent. In the sphere of imagination it had the author of *Robinson Crusoe,* in satire the author of *Gulliver's Travels,* in perfection of prose the author who made the *Spectator* an enduring pattern.

If he had no other title to fame than his journalism and his essays (which have been so overshadowed by his other achievements that a balanced criticism must lay special stress upon them), Mr. Churchill would deserve a high place in the history of the England of his time. In two hundred years of English political journalism, during which "Junius" and Sydney Smith, Macaulay and John Stuart Mill, Bagehot, Morley, Froude, and many another have shown what use can be made of this educational instrument in the great reviews, the standard of excellence is high. But if there has ever been journalism better adapted than the pieces in *Step by Step* to the educational

end in the field of foreign policy, I have not anywhere seen it. For anyone who desires a guide through the record of the four momentous years before the Second World War, a guide careful against overstatement, intent on keeping events in their proportionate importance, with knowledge of detail unsurpassed and an ever arresting lucidity of presentation, this is the book to which he may well turn.

What must first strike the reader of Mr. Churchill's essays, as contrasted with his political articles—his *Great Contemporaries* rather than his *Step by Step*—is his gift of detachment from the party strife in which he had spent so much of his strenuous career, and his magnanimity in trying to do justice to what was best in political opponents. He could say with St. Paul, about a leader from whose policies he dissented, "To whom I gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour"; and yet, reviewing afterwards the stages of the strife, he was anxious (whether he had himself prevailed or been defeated) to bring out in description whatever had been most admirable in an opponent's qualities, capacities, motives. He has always been intensely interested in psychological analysis, and free from what Trevelyan called Macaulay's fault of seeing human characteristics always as either black or white, though they are in truth so often a dull slatey grey. So when Mr. Churchill wrote essays on men so different as Curzon and Snowden, Birkenhead and Lloyd George, Haig and Smuts, it was a fascinating complex of human characteristics that he delighted to disentangle; and if the picture he constructs seems often contradictory, it may well for that very reason be the more true to life. Characteristics, as J. P. Mahaffy wrote, inconsistent with one another are consistent with that human nature in which they alike reside.

In these radical revolutionary days we have much need of a critic with such talent at once for analysis and for description; for a critic to whom those whom Mr. Aneurin Bevan so hates as having their names "in Society's upper drawer" are as intimately known as those whose names belong to the social lower drawer are known to Mr. Bevan. We want, surely, to do justice even to the much abused aristocrats. Formerly they were a privileged caste, exempt from criticism. Of late they have been more nearly, under a democratic régime, relegated to the section known in India as "depressed classes." And yet, what radicals dismissed so scornfully as "the accident of birth," when it favoured the *noblesse,* cannot in fairness be held at fault. For good or for evil, the aristocrats had no personal choice in the matter; the English peer, like the hunted convict in *Great Expec-*

tations, can now but say that "when he became aware of himself" he was conscious of being in a suspected group. Mr. Churchill in his picture of such personalities, "all God's creatures, even peers," as a considerate estimate runs, has thus rendered a service to social justice.

Would he have rendered it so effectively if he had not himself been in a certain mood by no means his highest, a mood of sceptical disillusionment about the ideals of human character? A cynical note has been discerned by some readers of his articles written during the latter half of the 1930's. But was it cynicism? Or disillusionment? Between the two it is often hard to distinguish.

II

Mr. Churchill's publications of 1936 to 1939 disclose from time to time how even he was discouraged as his efforts to stir the government and the public to a sense of the national danger seemed fruitless. In contrast with the serene confidence of his earlier and the exultation of his later work, a Montaignish touch of *nil admirari* may be noted in some of those products of his middle sixties. We observe, for example, his emphasis on the failure of an age to appreciate its own great men, on the constant misunderstanding of contemporaries, on the perverseness of popular distribution of praise and blame. One wonders whether a certain passage about John Morley was prompted by the writer's personal experience in the decade when he was himself without a seat in parliament, but so persistent in unsuccessful candidature as to provoke the satiric comment in a hostile press, "We have not yet got an unsinkable ship, but we have got an unsinkable politician." He wrote of Morley:

> Such men are not found to-day. Certainly they are not found in British politics. The tidal wave of democracy and the volcanic explosion of the War have swept the shores bare. I cannot see any figure which resembles or recalls the Liberal statesmen of the Victorian epoch. . . . Nowadays when "One man is as good as another—or better," as Morley once ironically observed, anything will do. The leadership of the privileged has passed away, but it has not been succeeded by that of the eminent. We have entered the region of mass effects. The pedestals which had for some years been vacant have now been demolished. Nevertheless, the world is moving on; and moving so fast that few have time to ask—whither? And to these few only a babel responds.[2]

Another paragraph, of Montaignish hue, is about national decline, describing the British race as now doubtful of its mission and no longer confident in its principles, infirm of purpose, drifting to and

[2]Winston L. S. Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* (London, 1937), p. 82.

fro with the tides and currents of a deeply disturbed ocean, its compass damaged, its charts out of date, the crew taking it in turn to be captain, and every captain before every movement of the helm forced to take a ballot not only of the crew but of an ever increasing number of passengers.[3]

One misses, in this so often sombre journalism, the buoyant enthusiast for what John Galsworthy called "the social resurrection of 1906."[4] Here and there the writer seems more like the pessimist of Israel, realizing how much of what he once prized had turned out to be "vanity and vexation of spirit." Make what allowance you will for his generous emphasis on what was best in those remote from his own temper of thirty years before; one cannot explain, except by a serious personal change, his extolling of certain purposes he had bidden his countrymen despise and his disparaging of certain purposes on which he had urged them to concentrate their effort. Perhaps he found some satisfaction in the thought that, after all, he had not himself in his first Tory years been so far wrong as the impetuous zeal of a convert to Liberalism at the age of thirty had led him to acknowledge. George Eliot's sagacious comment comes into my mind as I read some chapters of *Great Contemporaries*. "We have all of us," she wrote, "considerable regard for our past self, and are not fond of casting reflections on that respected individual by a total negation of his opinions."[5]

Take, for instance, the essay on Lord Rosebery, so remarkable both for its omissions and for its inclusions. In what mood did Mr. Churchill write there his glowing tribute to the patriotism of the "Liberal League" group, shown by its passionate support of Joseph Chamberlain's attack on the Transvaal? The Liberalism of that group was in foreign affairs indistinguishable from Kiplingesque Toryism, and how far was that from the creed of the Churchill of the days of the Lloyd George budget! How did he come to omit in his estimate of Rosebery all reference—even by way of apology or excuse —to that leader's abandonment of what the critic had urged for many years on his countrymen as essential to national salvation? How came those paragraphs of feudal homage to the grandeurs of aristocratic leadership from the pen of one who had shared, as Mr. Churchill had done, in the campaign against the House of Lords, describing the peers as "going up and down the country cursing and swearing,

[3]Winston L. S. Churchill, *Thoughts and Adventures* (London, 1932), pp. 240, 241.

[4]John Galsworthy, *Beyond*, chap. I.

[5]George Eliot, *Scenes from Clerical Life*, chap. XII.

and showing how incompetent they are to represent even themselves?"[6] How did his breadth of charity become so broad as to let him argue that the Joseph Chamberlain of radical pacifism in the 1880's showed only a sincere change of ideal when in the 1890's he plotted to drive the Boers into a war which would furnish a pretext for the imperialist seizure of their country? One notes with amazement the ferocious references to Irish Nationalists (the "eighty Irish votes now happily for ever withdrawn from the House of Commons")[7] by one whose eloquence had been so strenuously exerted to keep the Irish party in the imperial parliament. Why, it may be asked, should the co-operative effort of Irishmen for their country be such a "sinister influence," while the age-long co-operation of traders, brewers, landowners fighting at Westminster for their group interest is to be accepted as normal? One might multiply examples. Constantly as I read *Great Contemporaries,* with memory not only of what the writer had been but also of what he would later be, I am startled by the tone he showed in this interval, explaining away his own enthusiasms and discovering how those most hostile to his democratic projects had been right " after all." Is this, I often ask myself, Mr. Churchill? Or is it his friend the "gloomy Dean," whose sarcasm on old associates and apology to old antagonists exemplify a like Ecclesiastes mood?

In those years Mr. Churchill was accumulating against himself the suspicions now so widespread in the ranks of British Labour. Men such as Herbert Morrison, not to mention Aneurin Bevan, can quote much to render plausible their charge that his avoidance of "rash extremes" is but disguise for his return to sheer Toryism (not "democratic Toryism" or "Tory Democracy," but the undiluted cult of class privilege with which his career half a century ago began). Labour regards Mr. Churchill as having in 1924 so reacted against the decision of the Liberals to enable Ramsay MacDonald to form a government that he abandoned all the ideals of his Liberal period and has since become more intolerantly Tory than the changeless Tories themselves. Labour can point to the vehemence of his opposition ever since 1924 to reform proposals which one can now see to have been as plainly movements of social justice as the extension of the franchise in 1832 or the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846, fought

[6]The reference was to Lord Milner's advice, given in a public speech, that the House of Lords should not allow itself to be frightened by forecast of "consequences" into acceptance of Lloyd George's budget. "If," he exclaimed, "the budget is bad, throw it out and damn the consequences."

[7]Churchill, *Great Contemporaries,* p. 122.

as these were by contemporary Tories till they had to yield to the spirit of their age. Then there is his resistance to India's demand for self-government, his championship of that "Ulster" sedition which forty years ago he so denounced, his manœuvres against every project of public ownership and his constant defence of private monopoly. Labour also remembers his compliments to Mussolini and even to Hitler for the "strong arm" methods the dictators had made so effective against socialists in their respective countries;[8] his insistence that Great Britain and France should remain strictly "non-interventionist" in the Spanish Civil War, even when Nazi and Fascist reinforcements were plainly making Franco irresistible; his taxation scheme whose proposals Philip Snowden called "the worst rich man's budget of recent years" and which elicited from J. M. Keynes a whole volume of satiric denunciation under title *The Economic Consequences of Mr. Churchill.*

III

But though so much disappointed in the 1930's, Mr. Churchill—as his countrymen would discover with a thrill of thankfulness in the 1940's—was not of the kind in whom disappointment breeds despair. He developed a new and intense enthusiasm. This was for the Covenant of the League of Nations, with the Locarno Pact and the Kellogg Pact, as the one hope for world peace. Why did this enthusiasm take so long to develop? And why did it develop eventually? Reasons for both are tolerably plain in *Step by Step.*

The Preface (by his son) to *Arms and the Covenant* points out that his eager propagandism for the League did not begin until November, 1933, when Hitler had been more than six months in power. There is many a caustic allusion in Mr. Churchill's speeches before that date to the dream of world peace through "collective security." He never, indeed, mocked that dream, as some of his associates did. Even when he dwelt on preservation of British naval and French land forces as still the chief safeguard of peace, he joined in the hope that circumstances would later justify disarming. No such cynicisms came from his lips or from his pen as those with which Lord Birkenhead regaled Glasgow students in his Rectorial Address of 1924—about the glittering prizes the world continued to offer to those with stout hearts and sharp swords. But in the years 1929-33

[8]Cf. Winston L. S. Churchill, *Blood, Sweat and Tears* (London, 1941), p. 163: "Both in the early stages rendered great service to their countries." It is widely stated, though I have not found it anywhere in his writings, that Mr. Churchill said in the early period of Mussolini's régime, "If I were an Italian, I would be a Fascist."

he became plainly more and more apprehensive of the risks Great Britain was running with "pacifism," especially when the Nazi dictatorship began to reproduce, with far greater resources on which to draw, the militarist methods of the Fascist. Britain was persistently unresponsive to appeals that she guard herself. Was there still a chance of directing against this peril the "internationalism" which for many other purposes had an apparent popular appeal? Though he had never neglected to salute respectfully what he called the "pious labours at Geneva," it was not until the autumn of 1933 that, in alarm over the futility of other guarantees, Mr. Churchill began a passionate advocacy of the League.

Union Government, led by Ramsay MacDonald, was then in office. Set up two years before, when the great economic depression was at its worst, when 2,600,000 people were "on the Dole," when Great Britain was on the high road to national bankruptcy and the pound sterling likely to collapse in international exchange like the German mark or the French franc, it had to confront in 1933 a suddenly increased peril abroad. One could not yet be sure, but it was not too soon to be alarmed, about what the new German dictatorship meant. The most martial of European peoples had abolished its democratic system, had installed with ecstatic nation-wide acclaim a dictator urging defiant repudiation of the peace terms which the victors of 1918 had imposed, and had already within six months been equipping itself for what was dangerously suggestive of revenge. During the next three years—up to the date of his first article in *Step by Step*—these reasons for anxiety about Great Britain's position became ever graver in Mr. Churchill's mind. He had watched the rearming of Germany, the establishment in North Africa of Mussolini's "New Roman Empire," the Fascist and Nazi manœuvres in the Spanish Civil War as portentous as any threatened by Louis XIV and counteracted by the genius of Marlborough, the paralysis of France through party strife and the strength of the semi-fascist leagues there menacing the Republic. While all this was in process, he had found that the British government treated his warnings of danger as negligible, discounting them as prompted by personal discontent or jealousy. Ramsay MacDonald, Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain, differing on so much else, had alike assured parliament that Great Britain was quite sufficiently equipped for defence against dangers abroad, and that Mr. Churchill's figures of comparative strength, especially by air, were altogether erroneous. The popular cry was that not feverish counter-arming, but better understanding

reached by diplomacy with the dictators was the true safeguard of world peace. Baldwin's acknowledgment that in 1935 he had deliberately concealed the truth lest publishing it might injure his party's prospect at a general election tried his critic's temper past endurance. Can we blame Mr. Churchill for the phrases of mingled contempt and anger which issued occasionally from his lips or from his pen as he contemplated such guidance of his country from 1933 to 1939? We find phrases such as the one about Ramsay MacDonald's compression of the maximum of words into the minimum of thought![9] Or we read about the same premier's meeting with Mussolini in Rome—the master of sentimental words confronting the master of grim and rugged action—after which the former, "our modern Don Quixote with Sancho Panza at his tail," comes home safely, "bringing dubious trophies, amid the nervous tittering of Europe."[10] Others in office—Stanley Baldwin, Sir John Simon, Neville Chamberlain—fell from time to time under the lash of the same satiric tongue, but it was the habit, in those carefree 1930's, to discountenance and disparage Mr. Churchill as a man whose personal resentment at being relegated to "the pale shades of Opposition" made him see doom everywhere. How far this was either from doing justice to him or from the facts of a grim situation, has now to be remembered penitentially.

In those years he had to watch the drift faster and faster towards catastrophe as he could not induce the British government either to co-operate in "putting teeth into the League" or to rearm Britain with anything like adequacy for her own defence. The government would not even support France in stopping—as would have been so easy and of such vital importance in 1936—the German remilitarization of the Rhineland (in defiance not only of the peace treaties but of the Locarno Pact). They would not attempt to hold Hitler to the limits laid down by the Treaty of Versailles for German armed strength, but looked on with apparent unconcern while conscription was re-established in Germany under transparent pretences about the "Youth Movement" or "Athletic Associations" or "Strength through Joy." The British government would impose on Italy in the Abyssinian affair sanctions enough to exasperate but not enough to be effective. The same government would neither so prepare for genuine reinforcement of Czechoslovakia against aggression that the aggressor was likely to be deterred, nor warn the Czechs in time against depending on help they had no intention of supplying.

[9]Winston L. S. Churchill, *Arms and the Covenant* (London, 1938), p. 66.
[10]*Ibid.*, p. 73.

Ceaselessly through that period, now so dreadful in retrospect—well named "locust years" after the vivid imagery of the Book of Joel—Mr. Churchill's pen was at work, supporting in journalism his intense appeals on the floor of parliament against the drift to fatality that he saw. Coming closer and closer to the crisis—in the eighteen months after the seizure of Austria, especially in the eleven months after the Munich bargain at Czechoslovakia's expense, he showed no more of what I have called his "Ecclesiastes mood." No more reproaches, no more recriminations, no more lamentations over spilt milk, least of all any touch of "I told you so"; but a realistic facing of the one question which then mattered—"What is to be done *now*?"

Mr. Churchill's journalism and essay-writing ended in 1939. He would be the last to suggest that his country suffered by attending to other guides than himself in the press. But it is the plain truth, and others should say it for him. His journalism of the last years when he had leisure to be a journalist is, by itself, as one recalls it now in the light of later events, sufficient foundation for deathless fame in the record of his country's leadership.

STRUCTURE AND INTENTION IN THE FIRST FRAGMENT OF *THE CANTERBURY TALES*

WILLIAM C. STOKOE, JR.

NOT the least attraction of Professor Wilson's recent interpretation of Chaucer's Knight's Tale appearing in these pages is his opening statement: "The Knight's Tale is a masterpiece."[1] Very few students of Chaucer would take exception to it, and furthermore it expresses admirably the attitude of scholars who have recently published studies of that tale. There has long been agreement that *The Canterbury Tales* is a masterpiece, and the General Prologue is likewise so regarded. But following it and the Knight's Tale without a break—in fact with the closest kind of linkage Chaucer used—are the Miller's Prologue and Tale, the Reeve's Prologue and Tale, the Cook's Prologue, and fifty-seven lines of the Cook's unfinished tale. This 4422-line group of tales and links (designated Fragment I by Professor Robinson whose text I am using) is more than a repository for one or two masterpieces: it is a masterpiece itself.

As there is no need to press the claims of the General Prologue or the Knight's Tale, much of what follows will be a discussion of the other parts of Fragment I, though not with the purpose of declaring them individually masterpieces. The aim is to discover the artistic integrity of the group as a whole. Professor William Frost in another recent interpretation of the Knight's Tale[2] stops just short of a similar purpose. To support his interpretation he cites briefly several features of the Miller's Tale. The procedure here, however, will not be to argue for one or another interpretation of the Knight's Tale by reference to other tales but to discover how carefully Chaucer has interconnected all the parts of the group and to demonstrate if possible how in this group as in any work with a unified theme the whole transcends the sum of the parts.

I

Professor Frost calls the Miller's Tale "the principal external means by which the Knight's Tale is made dramatic and given a certain artistic distance both from the reader and from the poet of the *Canterbury Tales*" (p. 304). I should agree were I looking as he

[1]H. S. Wilson, *"The Knight's Tale* and the *Teseida* Again," *University of Toronto Quarterly,* XVIII, Jan., 1949, 131.

[2]William Frost, "An Interpretation of Chaucer's Knight's Tale," *Review of English Studies,* XXV, Oct., 1949, 289-304.

was only at the Knight's Tale in its immediate context; but looking at the first group of tales as a whole, one is committed to the principle that one part is as important as another to the whole, at least until a lack of artistic unity is demonstrated and one part emerges as more worthy of attention than its complete context.

Chaucer's method of uniting *The Canterbury Tales* is dramatic, particularly in Fragment I, and has been recognized and praised often for that quality. In the Miller's Prologue, for instance, there is a sharp clash between Robin Miller and Osewold the Reeve. There is also an exchange of strong language between the Miller and the Host. This is serious because it threatens the existence of the agreement by which the pilgrims are bound under the Host's rule, but it goes deeper. The Miller insists profanely on telling his tale for a reason sufficiently strong to overbalance the risk of incurring the Host's penalty. He is about to do more than give a picture of marriage which will contrast with that the Knight paints in lines 3101 to 3106.[3] He has listened to the Knight's whole tale with the strongest interest, not a sympathetic interest but the sharper attention of "a janglere and a goliardeys" (l. 560) who will contend for the prize in a contest of story-telling. Thus in a study of the unity of Fragment I it is important to know his interpretation of the Knight's Tale—not the interpretation of Chaucer's courtly or literary acquaintances nor that educed by the best modern scholarship but the Miller's own, warped and biased as it may be.

We cannot be certain that Robin Miller has no knowledge of the forms of chivalry and courtly love, for as "a goliardeys" he might have had acquaintance with them at least in degenerate romances;[4] but in his portrait in the General Prologue, his words with the Host, and his story itself we have no lack of evidence that, whatever his knowledge of the Boethian chain of love or the aspirations of the courtly lover beyond what he has just learned of them from the Knight, his attitude toward them will be cynical, or as he might say, realistic.

[3]Professor Frost, in "An Interpretation of Chaucer's Knight's Tale," quotes these lines and comments: "What a picture of married life! The Miller will show that there is another side to *that* story!" (p. 303).

[4]Professor F. N. Robinson, *The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Boston, 1933), "Explanatory Notes," 766-7, associates the word with the "goliardic" poetry of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and says "goliardic" "lost its literary association and came to be applied, as in the case of the Miller, to tellers of coarse tales and jests." The phrase "a janglere and a goliardeys" is illustrated, however, when the Miller speaks: he is a formidable opponent in a story-telling contest and must have often, as in this instance, at least listened to courtly tales before responding with a coarse tale or jest.

To him the Knight has told a story of two young men in love with the same young woman. Their rivalry, their likeness, and their differences were clear enough for Robin to grasp. It is the resolution of the complication which must most distress him. One of them prays to win the lady, the other for victory in the tournament. The latter wins but is fatally wounded when the gods intervene. Dying, he urges his rival's claim to his prize; but it is only after some years and on the avuncular advice of Theseus to make a virtue of necessity that the surviving two lovers are united. It is on this framework with significant differences that Robin constructs his rebuttal. We have his word that rebuttal it is when he interrupts the Host's request:

> "Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye konne
> Somwhat to quite with the Knyghtes tale."
> The Millere, that for dronken was al pale,
> So that unnethe upon his hors he sat,
> He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
> Ne abyde no man for his curteisie,
> But in Pilates voys he gan to crie,
> And swoor, "By armes, and by blood and bones,
> I kan a noble tale for the nones,
> With which I wol now quite the Knyghtes tale."
>
> (ll. 3118-28)

His emphasis on *quite* is unmistakable when compared with the Host's less emphatic use of the word. He makes it a monosyllable, the Host a dissyllable. His stress makes it the equal of *which* (the antecedent of which is the tale intended), *wol, Knyght–,* and *tale*; but the Host equates it metrically with a syllable of the indefinite *somwhat* and the prepositional or verbal extension *with*. Both use *quite* with a direct object, but the Host uses a less direct idiom, for to him it seems to signify only payment of the debt each pilgrim has contracted for. The Miller rudely says that he is going to tell off the Knight.

He (or Chaucer) has constructed his tale skilfully and at the same time polemically and characteristically, that is, dramatically, as an answer to the Knight's Tale. He begins with a leering hint that marriage is not at all as the Knight has conceived it, but he launches soon into a description of the wife, Alisoun, which conveys his contempt for the Knight's idealization of Emelye and his own lusty delight in the reality of a nubile woman.

If one may assume for the moment that the debate is launched (though the demonstration is to continue), this is a good place to examine Chaucer's method of conducting a debate. It is not his practice to beg the question or load the balance. He has warned the

reader in the General Prologue that there are violent contrasts in this company of pilgrims and has even drawn the lines of this first clash plainly:

> In al the route nas ther yong ne oold
> That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,
> And worthy for to drawen to memorie;
> And namely the gentils everichon. (ll. 3110-13)

That is one side at the end of the Knight's narration. Opposed to them are these others:

> The Millere is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;
> So was the Reve, and othere manye mo,
> And harlotrie they tolden bothe two. (ll. 182-4)

But though it is easy to gather from a knowledge of Chaucer and his other works that in such a conflict he will after all enrol himself on the side of the *gentils,* it is most important for an understanding of his temper and his method to see how fairly and open-mindedly he has played the devil's advocate. It is a different kind of art he employs, to be sure, in the Miller's Tale than in the Knight's Tale; but a critic will hardly undertake to prove that the description of the preparation for the tournament, for instance, is intrinsically better than the description of Alisoun. Any preference is likely to be moral or personal rather than aesthetic. If Chaucer arrays himself on the side of the *gentils* at last, he will do so only after an examination of the merits of the case.

The Miller's dissatisfaction with the Knight's characters extends to the rival lovers as well as to Emelye. Arcite, who considers his claim to Emelye to be superior because he loves her as a woman while Palamon, who saw her first, worships her as a goddess, is too romantic still for Robin. He makes his Nicholas a much more real if much less admirable character. Students, I have found, have not the slightest difficulty in recognizing the essential Nick in his modern counterpart; and it is the same with Absolon. The squeamish clerk does, as Professor Frost says, "burlesque the manners of chivalry";[5] but even more he represents Nicholas's opposite number, the bashful admirer of women from a distance. His room today would be decorated with "pin-ups," just as a modern Nicholas would have in his apartment a real or pretended collection of etchings.

The old carpenter owes nothing to the Knight's great central character but presents a striking contrast to Theseus. The wisdom, judgment, and direction of affairs in the gentle tale all rest with the

[5] "An Interpretation of Chaucer's Knight's Tale," 303.

mature "duc of Atthenes," whom the Knight represents as in the highest degree admirable. In the rude counter-tale the old carpenter is the victim of youth and lust, but the narrator wastes none of his or his readers' sympathies on the credulous old man. The Miller is quite ready to assert that the unchecked schemes and desires of youth determine how affairs of this kind will go. His characterization of the carpenter shows how little he believes in the reality of a man as wise as Theseus. He makes even more of this stock character, the rich and aged cuckold, and of the means of his deception.

Professor Frost says, "Christianity enters the story as a ready means of duping an illiterate and credulous husband";[6] and from his point of view this observation is correct and sufficient. His aim is to examine and interpret the Knight's Tale and to check his interpretation at this point by a look at the Miller's Tale. He notes that the mythological machinery of the first tale is roughly paralleled by the scheme with which Nicholas persuades the carpenter that a second deluge is near and offers to make him a second Noah. But when the field of vision is widened to take in all of Fragment I, the point of view moved to that of the next story-teller (an essential step in the widening and one that the poet of *The Canterbury Tales* takes often and skilfully but never without fair warning), the astrological-mythological machinery with its Boethian elements can be seen to do more than enter the second tale in a new guise. The Miller clearly recognizes its importance in the first tale; that is why he so maliciously distorts it in his own. It seems to be the Knight's earnest belief that the dispensations of providence correctly interpreted and implemented by such human agents as Theseus[7] will result in "blisse, in richesse, and in heele" (l. 3102).

Since the Miller does not share this belief, he must have understood the motivation somewhat in this fashion: the three principals in the Knight's Tale pray to three deities; the conflicting prayers cause confusion in heaven; the gods, untroubled by human ideas of equity, grant both Palamon's and Arcite's prayers by the simple and costly expedient of causing Arcite's death immediately after his victory; then, after some years pass, Theseus by reminding Palamon and Emelye of the uses of youth and love straightens out the mess the gods have made. Robin's heroine needs no such reminding, and Nicholas could hardly have been more precipitant; but the Miller is not content to

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] This function of Theseus in Chaucer's version of the tale is justly emphasized by Professor Wilson in "*The Knight's Tale* and the *Teseida* Again," 131-46.

quite the Knight's story by means of his more realistic characters only. The machinery of his plot must be more realistic too; or, to put all this on a statistical basis, he demonstrates in his story that, for every tournament winner killed by a fall[8] from a horse frightened by a fury sent from hell to answer conflicting prayers, there are numbers of old fools taken in by astrologers, soothsayers, false prophets of doom, and fortune-tellers equipped as Nicholas is with "astrelabie" and "augrym stones" (ll. 3209 f.). Granted his way of looking at things, Robin couldn't be more right; and it must be granted too that his supernatural machinery, despite its complications, corresponds with the facts of the life he lives as a miller with a "thombe of gold."[9]

On ground just as solid, if we permit the Miller for the moment to hold it, is his treatment of the rivals in love. The one of his pair of lovers who takes direct action gets an immediate promise of success, and his tenure is never in danger. The other is not only defeated but wounded where he is painfully vulnerable, in his vanity and fastidiousness. There is a burlesque of the balance maintained between Palamon and Arcite when Absolon turns the tables on his rival for trying to enjoy too much his advantage and Absolon's discomfiture.

II

> When folk hadde laughen at this nyce cas
> Of Absolon and hende Nicholas,
> Diverse folk diversely they seyde,
> But for the moore part they loughe and playde."
>
> (ll. 3855-8)

The third line is fascinating for what it leaves unsaid. Could there have been any who heartily admired the excellence of this tale and just as heartily approved the attitude of the Knight it was told to *quite*? There could certainly have been one among the pilgrims. But even if this were the view of the majority it could not prevail, for among the minorities covered by the third line is Osewold. The brilliance of the Miller's performance and the clarity with which it exposes his brutal materialism in opposition to the Knight's idealism have been lost on the Reeve. He sees no virtue in it except specious truth, for he seems, in spite of Robin's warning, to accept the tale as

[8] I am indebted to an anonymous student for pointing out that the Miller's mischievous parallelism extends even to the fall: just as Arcite's supernaturally induced fall is the means in one tale of resolving the complicated triangle, so the carpenter's superstitiously self-inflicted fall is the means of ensuring the successful lover's continuing success in the other.

[9] Line 563; that is, Robin is an *honest* miller!

proof of his own wife's infidelity. Shamelessly and self-pityingly in his prologue he complains of the wretchedness of an old man, but he querulously proceeds to avenge himself.

Through his story of a trickster tricked he accomplishes his revenge and crows at the end, "Thus have I quyt the Millere in my tale." So he has, and so he has received credit for doing ever since the Cook said:

> "I pray to God, so yeve me sorwe and care,
> If evere, sitthe I highte Hogge of Ware,
> Herde I a millere bettre yset a-werk." (ll. 4335-7)

But Jolly Roger has forgotten entirely the first tale told that day or never listened to it; at any rate he speaks as if only the Miller and the Reeve had preceded him. When we consider all three preceding tales and not just the two told by the *cherls,* though, we can see a more complex and significant effect of the third than this obvious one. In the first place, the Cook has awarded the decision to the wrong wrangler. The Miller tells an improper story, but its excellence and special interest come from his art in telling it. The realistic description and dialogue raise it to a higher level than any other version of it could attain—to say nothing of the importance it achieves by being a contradiction to the Knight's solution of a fatal complication in love. The Reeve, however, tells an improper story with more spleen than art. He dwells longer on the impropriety, and although the miller of Trumpyngtoun is the chief target of his malice, in his anger he lets side blows fall on the miller's wife, daughter, and father-in-law, and on the poor Cambridge scholars. The Miller is ill-mannered, but the Reeve is ill-natured. There is, in the second place, a more important matter in Fragment I than the contest of these two *cherls.* The Miller's performance is brilliant but perverse, and by complaining that the Miller "kan wel in myn eye seen a stalke, But in his owene he kan nat seen a balke," and by boasting that he could full well *quite* him "With bleryng of a proud milleres ye," the Reeve dramatically proves it perversely brilliant. The eyes of neither of them are quite clear, but it is the Reeve's angry blindness to what the Miller was replying to the Knight that proves that the first tale by a *cherl* is not and cannot come to good. "Oonly Osewold the Reve" goes quite wrong at first, but he is enough. Such a morality or lack of it as Robin professes is dangerous because it does not edify but traps a weaker sinner than himself.

By the time Osewold has finished, the Cook, not unexpectedly, and Harry Bailly, who can behave better, carry on in a manner less

choleric perhaps but just as rude and tasteless. The aftermath of the Knight's Tale is unedifying, but really unedifying only to the pilgrims who respond vocally to the Miller's Tale. The spectacle of the angry Reeve, the unprincipled Cook, and even the usually courteous Host carrying on as if the *gentils* had not been present is Chaucer's dramatic representation of the evils inherent in the Miller's view of life and love; it is equally his demonstration that the Knight's view is wise and just.

The contrast between the Knight's and Miller's ways of treating stories about two men in love with the same woman gives the first fragment its essential structure. The General Prologue prepares the way for this clash of attitudes and introduces all the participants in it as it does for the other tales and groups of tales. The Reeve's and Cook's tales and their prologues grow out of the clash, and the manner in which they do so is a clear indication of the nature and the consequences of the debate and Chaucer's central intention in this part of *The Canterbury Tales*. Thus not only the conflicts of *gentil* with *cherl,* reeve with miller, cook with innkeeper, but also conflicts in attitudes toward youth and age, romance and realism bind the first fragment into a whole. The dramatic nature of Chaucer's structure planned for *The Canterbury Tales* needs no reiteration. His characters may be seen and heard as in a lifelike manner they carry forward the consequences of their meeting at the Tabard, but life is not art, and the value of a study of Fragment I as a whole is the knowledge it can contribute to an understanding of the motivation for this lifelike action which is consistent with the parts of the work and with Chaucer's attitudes and methods of work.

THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAM AND POETRY

V. G. Hopwood

JUST as it is possible to trace back the manifest or surface elements in a dream, its images and events, to the previous experience of the dreamer, it is possible to show how the words and content of a poem are derivable from the poet's life. John Livingston Lowes has demonstrated this possibility in his justly famous study[1] examining the sources of two poems by Coleridge, *The Ancient Mariner* and *Kubla Khan*. Although it takes as its starting-point the common source of dreams and poetry in individual experience, this article has the purpose of indicating how the nature of poetry puts limits on its interpretation by the methods of psycho-analysis.

Sigmund Freud states clearly the typical and fundamental psychoanalytic approach to art.

> [The artist] is not the only one who has a life of phantasy; the intermediate world of phantasy is sanctioned by general human consent, and every hungry soul looks to it for comfort and consolation. But to those who are not artists the gratification that can be drawn from the springs of phantasy is very limited; their inexorable repressions prevent the enjoyment of all but the meagre day-dreams which can become conscious. A true artist has more at his disposal. First of all he understands how to elaborate his day-dreams, so that they lose that personal note which grates upon strange ears and become enjoyable to others; he knows too how to modify them sufficiently so that their origin in prohibited sources is not easily detected. Further, he possesses the mysterious ability to mould his particular material until it expresses the ideas of his phantasy faithfully; and then he knows how to attach to this reflection of his phantasy-life so strong a stream of pleasure that, for a time at least, the repressions are out-balanced and dispelled by it. When he can do all this, he opens out to others the way back to the comfort and consolation of their own unconscious sources of pleasure, and so reaps their gratitude and admiration; then he has won—through his phantasy—what before he could only win in phantasy: honour, power, and the love of women.[2]

Although Freud, in a later set of lectures, revised his conception of the nature of dream from that of wish-fulfilment to resolution of conflict,[3] the modification remained primarily formal, and did not fundamentally alter his approach to the supposed underlying content of the dream. Certainly he never revised his approach to art in any fundamental way. Art, according to this approach, is a superior kind

[1] *The Road to Xanadu* (Boston, 1927).
[2] *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (London, 1922), 314-15.
[3] *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (3rd ed., London, 1946), 25.

of dream. It is superior in that it is better at fooling the critical faculties and overpowering them. If there was ever a defence of poetry which is an admission of guilt to the charge of dope-peddling, the above quotation is it. However, the rejection of the implied concept of poetry should not blind us to a feature that poetry shares with dream.

Although it is more accurate to say that a dream is an attempt to solve in phantasy a conflict arising in experience than it is to call it a wish-fulfilment, the concept of wish-fulfilment has relative validity. It has this validity because the conditions of solution in dream are easier than those in reality. The attempt at a solution of conflict in real life can only succeed on the basis that it meets the sterner conditions of real choice. In dream the resolution takes place according to wish-determined autistic processes, rather than by critical thinking. The bridge between desire and realization in the dream world can be built of all types of logically false material, such as accidental associations, puns, and trivial resemblances. Reality is distorted according to wish. It loses the stubborn quality which characterizes it in our waking relations with it. The moral skeleton of our living is loosened and softened. We do things that in waking we would reject, and the people who appear in dreams similarly depart from their ordinary code of action. In the same way the articulation of natural law is loosened in our sleep. The restrictions of time and space are put aside. So are the necessary connections of cause and effect. The law of gravity may or may not operate. We may fall or we may fly. Fire may or may not burn. It is noteworthy that we do not ordinarily pass judgments on dreams. They are pleasant or unpleasant, strange or as real as life, but, for all that, not judged good or bad. Our attitude to dreams is one of irresponsibility. To place art, as Freud does, in the same class as dream, is to abandon at once the traditional standards of judgment for art. For where logical connection, natural and social law, and responsibility do not hold, it is hard to see the applicability of the traditional standards of beauty, truth, and goodness; of form, imitation, and morality.

In poetry we find something of the loosening of the laws of nature and society that is found in dream.[4] In *The Ancient Mariner,* for example, the deeds and their consequences are not commensurable with our normal values. Because a sailor shoots a sea-bird, two hundred of his shipmates must die and he himself be condemned to endless penance. Nor are the events of the tale credible. They involve

[4]Christopher Caudwell, *Illusion and Reality* (London, 1947), 185. The reader who is familiar with this work will recognize how much I owe to it.

a sea-daemon taking revenge, and ships that sail without wind, among many other strange things. It is true that all of the elements might have been believed at an earlier period of human history, but that does not explain their potency for the unbelieving mind. What must be recognized is that, just as in a dream, so in art, the individual lives temporarily in a world of illusion, where the moral and physical laws of ordinary life are racked according to the demands of the emotions. In art, however, the distortion is not automatic, determined, and blind, as in the dream. A work of art has a unity. That unity derives from a subject, and proceeds according to a unified sense of what it is to be a man with a certain emotional tendency in a world fitted or unfitted to that bent. The logic of *The Ancient Mariner* is internally consistent like a system of geometry. But its logic is not simply that of the world of experience. Its world is rather made up of elements which are drawn from experience, and recognizable as such, but so organized as to permit a particular emotional development. In *The Ancient Mariner* there is a movement of putting oneself out of the community of man by crime and returning to it through repentance and mercy. The world of the poem is one which leads to the emotional recognition of the horror of being apart from other men and guilty beyond them. Through suffering and recognition of the beauty of the world and men, and by means of daemons and an angelic troop, the plot of the poem leads the Mariner to the joy of seeing his home again. Afterwards follows the adjustment to that joy in the further penance by which the memory of his crime compels him to wander and tell his story.

Psycho-analytic theory itself provides an alternative of sorts to the dream analogy of wish-fulfilment through art, by its own theory of psychological relief through abreaction. By living in the mock world of art, we are able to relive or re-experience the causes of our frustration and to act out or work off our repression. It does not seem unreasonable to guess that Milton in the writing of *Lycidas* relieved himself of a feeling of bafflement at the ways of divine justice and aligned his resentment of corrupt ecclesiastical practices to his belief that men can be the agents of God. Similarly, we can work off our annoyance with our enemies by letting Milton's words blast them for us. There is a difference here between dream and abreaction. The process of abreaction brings the true source of annoyance into consciousness, and provides us with a way of dealing with it, while dream supposedly deals with our frustrations in disguise. Between poetry and both dream and abreaction there is still a further difference. Poetry brings form and unity into the material of the dream or material similar to that which psycho-analysis brings to the surface for abreaction. Into the

chaos of stimuli and feelings, art brings order and with it a feeling of intelligibility. Art is not only a kind of dream. As Alain points out,[5] it is in a sense the antidote to dream, relieving us from its accidents and disorder. It is also more than therapy through abreaction. The emotional tensions involved are more than reintroduced and expressed. They are expressed socially, within a shared system of meanings. They are also transformed. The transformation is into a world of feeling so organized that it can be felt as all belonging to the consciousness at once. This consciousness is not the drifting consciousness of dream, daydream, or the psycho-analyst's couch. It involves character, the sense of individuality defined by consciousness of attitudes and roles in social activity.

In each work of art there is a greater or lesser unity of feeling—joy, remorse, pity, affection, or determination. In it the ego has the social freedom of putting on a garment to fit its feelings and needs. Job is the way to be afflicted, Othello to be jealous, Faust to be individualistic, for in these are revealed the full power, glory, and tragedy of such states. Dreamland may seem the land of wish-fulfilment. Actually it is the land of determined phantasy, without unity, and without outcome. But the world of poetry transforms the emotions so that they can seek social ends. It alters the emotions so that they can take part in the social processes of transforming reality to suit desire. Art is a claiming of the emotions for the realm of freedom, which is that of social co-operation and work, of knowledge and action. It is also a world into which the emotions enter of their own desire, to the extent that they are socialized and directed, for in the world of art is to be found a new vision of reality which makes it suitable to the feelings.

The worlds of illusion that we find in dreams and works of art are derived from experience. The elements from experience that go to make up the dream, according to the psycho-analysts, are altered by a set of processes called the dream-work. The determining element in the dream, according to Freud, is the latent content, the dream-thought, or the hidden wish, which seizes on elements from experience in which to fulfil itself, and distorts these elements according to its own demands and the need to disguise the fulfilment from the critical faculties (the censor).

One of the most puzzling procedures of psycho-analysis is the attempt to transcribe the manifest content of a dream into an unconscious dream-thought which is "perfectly accurate,"[6] and which is expressed in the manifest dream. Such a procedure suggests not

[5]Alain (pseud.), *Système des Beaux-Arts* (4e éd., Paris, 1926), 22.
[6]S. Freud, "The Interpretation of Dreams," in *Basic Writings* (New York, 1938), 466.

merely the existence of an unconscious mind, but that such a mind is more rational than the conscious one, a suggestion which is in contradiction to the rest of psycho-analytic theory. Further, the manifest dream is supposed to be a poor substitute for the wealth of the underlying dream content. "The dream is meagre, paltry and laconic in comparison with the range and copiousness of the dream-thoughts. The dream, when written down, fills half a page; the analysis, which contains the dream-thoughts, requires six, eight, twelve times as much space."[7] In what sense the thoughts contained in the analysis exist in the unconscious mind is hard to guess. It seems likely that to call the latent content of the dream any kind of "thought" at all is a misnomer. It is an urge to act, with one or more natural outlets, and with a particular history of conditioning and suppressing. When Freud speaks of such an urge as "perfectly accurate" he can only be referring to the existence of the urge as a fact, instead of as phantastically expressed in the dream. The endless richness of the dream-thought is not of a thought at all, but of the place which the underlying urge or desire has in the organization of the individual concerned. It can be endlessly elaborated because of the interconnectedness of the personality and the complexities of its development. The so-called wealth and accuracy of the dream-thought is not that of some super-rational subrationality, but of the history of the dreamer, and the acumen of the analyst in tracing it.

There is in literary criticism an error corresponding to the myth of a latent thought: it is the myth of the content of a poem as distinct from the poem itself. One of its forms is that of paraphrasing and elaborating upon the poem in the hope of finding its real meaning in a proposition. Whereas the "meaning" of a dream is a suppressed emotion, the "meaning" of a poem is a directed emotion. The latter cannot be found in any alternative set of words, but only in its own words with their ordered denotations, connotations, and sounds. The truth of a poem in the sense of a proposition accurately giving information is secondary, and may be absent. The truth of a poem in the sense of its enduring worth is its power to turn emotion from inward frustration and sterility into social form and richness. The propositions that define such directed feeling are not themselves the meaning of the poem any more than a definition of water is itself water. There is no theoretical reason why such a definition should not be precise, and in proportion to its precision a proper basis for the evaluation of a poem. And like the inadequately directed feeling behind the dream it can be described at greater length than the poem itself. It will not

[7] *Ibid.*, 320.

thereby acquire a value beyond the poem, although it will have peculiar values of its own which are not those of any dream or poem. Neither should we be surprised that such a definition will have lost the emotional qualities of what it describes. We do not expect the definition of anger to rage or of a herring to taste fishy. Criticism is not poetry, nor should loose prose paraphrases with second-hand emotional images watered down from the original be mistaken for poetry.

If the idea of an accurately formulated thought behind the dream is abandoned, then it is no longer necessary to think of the manifest dream as directly symbolizing the dream-thought. If, further, the concept of wish-fulfilment is replaced by that of an attempt to solve in phantasy a conflict between two desires, or between a desire and our inhibitions, or between a desire and our knowledge of what is possible, there is no need to search for a static set of meanings which unlocks the dream. The manifest content of a dream becomes not direct symbolization so much as the symbols in which the conflict is elaborated and worked out.

The characteristics of the phantasy in developing the dream-thought, or as we have suggested in attempting to solve a conflict, are, according to Freud, condensation, displacement, representation, and secondary elaboration. Undermining Freud's theory of a latent content removes condensation of the latent content, and its displacement, from their place at the head of the list of dream-work processes. The shift in emphasis from wish-fulfilment to solution of conflict in the approach to dreams brings to the fore the dream process which is especially concerned with conflict, namely, representation or symbolization. That representation is the process concerned particularly with conflict is brought out in the suggestion of W. H. R. Rivers that representation can be broken down into two phases or processes, symbolization and dramatization.[8] In looking at poetry as related to dream, we begin therefore with the dream-work process of representation or symbolization.

Freud's insistence on a dream-thought behind every dream naturally leads to the proposition to which he adheres that every dream is a disguise, and no dream means what it appears to mean. However, as has been shown by Rivers, there are many dreams in which the under-lying conflict appears in quite recognizable terms. Some dreams of the wish-fulfilment type, for example, quite openly present their consummation. A small boy will dream he is eating a mountain of ice cream.

[8]W. H. R. Rivers, *Conflict and Dream* (London, 1923), 21.

Further, it is not universally necessary to go back to infancy in order to interpret a dream. Childhood and family relations are not the only sources, and need not even be the primary source, of frustrations and conflict. This question of underlying source and significance alone is sufficient to restrict all of the psycho-analytic attempts to set up a universal system of symbolization for the interpretation of either dreams or art to partial validity. Of the two main attempts, one by Freud and the other by Jung, to set up a language of symbols, that of Freud is least rigid in its correlation of symbol and hidden meaning. On the other hand it remains more narrowly within the sexual and family approach. At times one feels that for the Freudian, knives, ploughs, and pillars were not made to cut wood, turn over soil, or support buildings, but to serve as sexual symbols.

The assumptions behind Jung's theory are, at the same time, a little less naïve and a little more mystical. He assumes, and argues from as well as for, a phylogenetic inherited memory for the whole human species which operates independent of education and which links certain symbols to certain unconscious thoughts. The widespread use of some symbols, upon which he bases the idea of a collective unconsciousness, can be explained in other ways. At the same time the collective unconsciousness theory cannot deal with the variation in the meanings of literary symbols, which is as striking as their common features. There is no question but that there is a certain fixing of symbols in every society and, to the extent that various societies have features in common and contact with each other, they have symbols in common. These symbols, however, are more likely to occur in art than they are in dream, since dream does not make much distinction between universal symbols and personal associations. Close investigation shows that such symbols appearing in dreams fluctuate as they quite apparently do in literature.[9]

The problem of symbols in art, then, is not solved, but only given a certain amount of clarification by psycho-analytic theories of dream interpretation. The interpretation of dreams itself leads beyond a stereotype of the family and bodily symbol substitutions, useful as these are, both to the peculiar circumstances of the individual and to the particular culture.

All the above problems of representation and dramatization in the attempt to reach behind dreams to an underlying meaning are found in similar attempts in literary criticism to find hidden meanings behind public ones. Whatever the difficulties we may have in understanding a poem, we do not expect them to arise from a latent content which psycho-

[9]J. S. Lincoln, *The Dream in Primitive Cultures* (London, 1935), 22-3.

logical sleuthing will expose. The contradictory and fanciful attempts to solve the riddle of the dark lady of Shakespeare's sonnets form one of the persistent themes of scholarly gossip. Such innuendo is interesting, but it has done little to enhance the appreciation of the sonnet sequence that attentive reading and the study of Elizabethan ideas won't do ten times over. Whatever else the poems may significantly symbolize, it is not a private latent content to be found in Shakespeare's personal biography, no matter how useful knowledge of that might be, if it were authoritatively available to us.

Besides symbolization, two other features of the dream-work, namely displacement and condensation, shape the solution of psychological conflict into its dream form. According to Freud, the emotion that attaches to the central elements of the latent content are displaced to some other feature. The centre of the dream is not the centre of the dream-thoughts. The universality of the displacement process is doubtful, for there are many recorded dreams whose emotional force is centred in the elements most directly connected with the conflict underlying the dream. A good deal of such displacement can certainly be laid at the door of the fortuitous uncritical nature of the connections which build up the events of dreams. Also, since the assumption of a latent thought behind each dream cannot be justified, there is no reason to expect that the psychic intensity of a dream can be located near something corresponding to a latent thought. Even the principle that symbols are accepted or rejected according to their painful or pleasurable associations does not involve a universal occurrence of displacement. Whether or not displacement is a constant feature of dream, however, it is not a usual feature of poetry, at least not to the reader, whatever may be involved in the psychic processes of the writer. Thus an attempted analysis by Robert Graves of *La Belle Dame sans Merci* reveals a supposed conflict in Keats which no one from any straightforward reading of the poem would ever guess.[10] If Graves's wild and sordid conjecture about the source of Keats's poem could be shown to be correct, it would only indicate the complete irrelevance of psychological sources for literary criticism. The idea of poetry as the disguise through images of a real mental condition in the poet's mind is often perverse even at the first glance at a poem. Where is the disguise in the following fairly typical Elizabethan song by George Peele?

> When as the rye reach to the chin,
> And chopcherry, chopcherry ripe within,
> Strawberries swimming in the cream,
> And school-boys playing in the stream;

[10] *The Meaning of Dreams* (London, 1924), 136-45.

Then O, then O, then O my true love said,
Till that time come again,
She could not live a maid.

Even in poetry such as the passage below from Hart Crane's *The Bridge* that aspires to link words in a manner resembling the flow of impressions and associations in waking or sleeping life, the links are scarcely private. The daydream expands and becomes available. Place yourself beside a railway track, with a train approaching. Its noise mounts, becomes a sustained thought-excluding roar, which suddenly decreases as it passes, and then gradually fades away and leaves room for other thoughts.

. . . and the telegraphic night coming on Thomas
a Ediford—and whistling down the tracks
a headlight rushing with the sound—can you
imagine—while an EXPRESS makes time like
SCIENCE—COMMERCE and the HOLYGHOST
RADIO ROARS IN EVERY HOME WE HAVE THE NORTHPOLE
WALLSTREET AND VIRGINBIRTH WITHOUT STONES OR
WIRES OR EVEN RUNning brooks connecting ears
and no more sermons windows flashing roar
breathtaking—as you like it . . . eh?
So the 20th Century—so
whizzed the Limited—roared by and left
three men, still hungry on the tracks, ploddingly
watching the tail lights wizen and converge,
slipping gimleted and neatly out of sight.

There is no displacement here. The emotion is centred around the train, which is quite straightforwardly the symbol of twentieth-century commercial ballyhoo. The events of the passing are the assurance that the whizzing twentieth century is really of limited importance, and will quickly pass, leaving things as they were before. For all of its power, roar, and boasting, it leaves men still hungry and searching.

Again, according to Freud's theory, the dream is supposed to condense all of the rich latent thought into its various symbols. The existence of definite latent thought, as has been pointed out, is dubious. Nevertheless, the symbols of the dream do pick up a great deal of the previous events of the dreamer's life and the feelings attached to them. Desires which were put aside in the comparatively directed waking activity attach themselves to events and objects in experience according to any sort of link at all. Moreover, many feelings can attach themselves to a single symbol, and the symbol in its turn awakes other feelings. Thus the dream becomes what Freud calls "over-determined." Each element may be loaded with a variety of meanings, and derive its feeling content from a great number of events in the

dreamer's previous experience. Because the background, which can be revealed by analysis, is more varied and extensive than the dream itself, Freud says that the manifest content of the dream is poor and condensed compared with the latent thought.

The chance nature of the condensation in dreams makes personal analysis necessary in most cases, in order to understand what lies behind it. To the understanding, and even to the socialized feelings, its connections are inconsequential and arbitrary. They must be searched for. Beyond this lie the difficulties arising from the suppression of painful or inadmissible thought. In art there takes place a similar condensation of feeling and its connections. The instrument of such changes is the individual artist through whose sensibility experience and social practice are filtered. The application of the word "poor" to the condensation in dreams does not seem necessarily apt. For poetry it is certainly inept. There condensation is a real distillation. Each word, for instance, in poetry is, according to Freud's usage, and according to the demands for univocal terms in logic, over-determined. This over-determination of symbols in art is what makes possible the great variation in interpretations of a poem or a painting. At the same time the fortuitous and idiosyncratic elements of emotional association are largely eliminated, or at least subordinated to public and available social determinations. Lowes' *Road to Xanadu* is devoted to revealing the reading and experiences which went into two of Coleridge's poems. The exact sources are largely concealed in the final work. Nevertheless the whole poem, in this instance *The Ancient Mariner,* provides a whole, organized, and disciplined world of socialized emotional experience for the imagination of the reader to live in. Any part provides a concentration of human meaning which can be read again and again and be almost endlessly explored in its condensation, which is the richness of the poem. Examination also reveals a structure in the apparent simplicity which is capable of supporting the meaning concentrated in it.

The last of the processes at work in giving the manifest content of a dream its remembered shape is what is called secondary elaboration. It is more like the critical processes of waking thought than anything else encountered in the formation of dreams. It is the process which restricts and adds to the manifest content to give it a semblance of order. "This function proceeds in a manner which the poet maliciously attributes to the philosopher: with its rags and tatters it stops up the breaches in the structure of the dream. The result of its efforts is that the dream loses the appearance of absurdity and incoherence, and approaches the pattern of an intelligible experience."[11] It is to be no-

[11]Freud, *Basic Writings,* 456.

ticed that the mode of action is rather that to which Coleridge gives the name "fancy" than "imagination." At first, wish and conflict produce symbols and dominate their appearance and order. Then the "fancy" hooks them together in what usually is a makeshift way. Fancy connects but does not change the parts according to a concept of the whole, or shape the whole to accord with the properties of the parts. The unification of fancy is according to an external principle. Fancy resembles secondary elaboration in searching for a unification of "seems," in doing a scissors-and-paste job of rationalization.

Imagination, on the other hand, creates according to an over-all picture that finds its parts and shapes them into harmony with the whole. *Lycidas* uses traditional and conventional elements that Milton, like any other seventeenth-century poet, had in his bag of tricks. But each element is recast to belong by its very character to the whole. Another great example is *The Ancient Mariner*. Each element is not only a part. It is a bond of the total unity. There is the sweep of the great exploratory voyages from the accounts of which Coleridge took so much, southward across the line through the Atlantics, around the Horn and northward through the Pacific to the equator again, and then the hopes and fears of homecoming. Each of the other major elements, the central character, his crime and expiation, and the supernatural machinery are similarly not merely parts, but the sinews, the nervous system, and the bloodstream, integrating the whole.

Secondary elaboration makes an automatic uncritical use of logic. It is the pseudo-use of a real social form of thought, derived from work, the directed use of the human faculties. Its activity occurs in the translation of the dream from its individual form in sensory images into the social medium of words. There is something here that certainly resembles the creation of at least a large part of poetry. An experience, whether a real experience, a dream, or a daydream, is translated into words. But not every translated dream is poetry. Poetry is not merely a translation of images. It is something that is complete in words, and whose properties are special properties of speech. Its words may contain images, but they are more than signs which stand for images. The sounds and emotional connotations enter into its character as much as do the significations. Dream is a series of individual images directed by the pressure of feeling. Its character is fundamentally non-social and non-rational; words ordinarily will not adequately convey it; and they play only a small part in its proceedings. Poetry is directed feeling. It is the feeling which social usage gives to words organized into a unity.

The work of the poet is poet's work, word-work, and not dream-work. Much the same is true of the other arts. The painter's job is

brushwork, not internal visualizing. The musician produces sounds. All are generators and directors of social feeling. They work in modifications of their own medium. They do artist's work. But dream is not work. It is not produced with a concept from beforehand of what it is to be. What is called inspiration is precisely this, the shaping vision which projects the finished task. It is the turning-point of a long process which cannot be specified as fundamentally conscious or unconscious, but which at this turning-point must be conscious, since it involves the projection of an object, a modification of external reality which will externalize and hold an emotionally satisfactory resolution of a conflict.

The emotional resolution in art differs from that of dream in being embodied in a social form, and in being made up of elements that of themselves have social significance drawn from their place in the common world of objects, labour, and social organization. Such an embodied resolution, being public and available, is necessarily subject to criticism. It may be criticized practically and automatically, without formulated principles, by applause, indifference, or rejection. It may be appraised consciously, according to its materials, workmanship, general idea, agreement with fact, tradition, morality, or its disturbing or stabilizing effect in society, to name a few of the more important critical approaches.

For all these differences, however, the similarity between dream and poetry is clear, and remains essential. We can grasp it in two ways. On the one hand poetry may be described as a dream in socialized form, and on the other as the introduction of the dream into social life. The problem of criticism is, which of these two positions is legislative. The first is that of the earlier long quotation from Freud on the function of art. This position is also essentially that of the purely aesthetic approach, which derives its standards simply from the feelings, or the formal characteristics which are imposed by the feelings and which make the art object satisfactory to the feelings. There is, of course, a difference in the degree of cultivation of the feelings which corresponds to the difference between crude wish-fulfilment art and the art of pure aesthetic sensibility, but this difference and both these types of art remain capable of description within the Freudian formula. This essay has tried to show art as joining individual phantasy and social meaning, transforming individual phantasy into social phantasy. Thus, while poetry shares the phantastic and emotional nature of dream, poetry's symbols, organization, and meaning are social and communicable, and the interpretation of it is fundamentally social and not psycho-analytic.

THE *CANTOS OF MUTABILITY*: SPENSER'S LAST TESTAMENT OF FAITH

JUDAH L. STAMPFER

THE *Cantos of Mutability* have presented a problem to critics since they were appended to the 1609 edition of the *Faerie Queene* as a fragment entitled "Two Cantos of Mutability: Which, both for Forme and Matter, appeare to be parcell of some following Booke of the *Faerie Queene*, under the legend of *Constancie*. Never before imprinted." We do not know how the material came into the hands of Matthew Lownes, the publisher, nor do we know when the *Cantos* were written or how they were intended by Spenser to be related to the *Faerie Queene*. In this paper I shall argue that the *Cantos* were written during the few weeks of Spenser's last visit to England, between the fall of 1598 and January 13, 1599, when he passed away in Westminster,[1] and that they were intended as a brief philosophical poem to complete his otherwise fragmentary epic, the *Faerie Queene*.

I

So fundamental are the differences between the *Cantos* and the *Faerie Queene* that some critics[2] have denied that they were intended as a part of the epic at all. While the weight of critical opinion has been against this position, any proposed account of the *Cantos* must consider the cogency of its objections, including the wide variance between the content of the *Cantos* and that of the *Faerie Queene*. However fragmentary the *Cantos* may be in relation to a complete "legend of *Constancie*" of which the publisher supposes them to form a part, in themselves they are a complete, polished, and exquisite poem. Beginning with the description of Mutability, Spenser discusses her origin, her ambition for dominion, her first assault on Cynthia, and her forcible entry into the court of Jove. After a brief and delightful digression on the legend of Molanna and Faunus, the following canto describes the trial before Dame Nature and the judgment of Nature. The two stanzas of Canto viii, which have been taken by critics to be Spenser's customary introduction to another canto, might equally plausibly be an *envoi* to the complete poem of Mutability as we have it.

[1]The latest possible date for his arrival in England is before December 24, when he delivered letters to Whitehall, while the date of his death is established exactly by a contemporary reference. "Spencer, our principal poet, coming lately out of Ireland, died at Westminster on Saturday last." *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, I, 64-5, quoted in A. C. Judson, *The Life of Edmund Spenser* (Baltimore, 1945), 201.

[2]S. Evans, "A Lost Poem by Edmund Spenser," *Macmillan's Magazine*, XLII, 1880, 145-51.

In order to appreciate its unique quality, one must sharply distinguish this complete and well-rounded poem on Mutability both from the narrative stream of the *Faerie Queene* and from the occasional mythological digressions. The latter, whether involving static descriptions, as in the Garden of Adonis (Bk. III, Canto vi), or pageantry and movement, as in the wedding of the Medway and the Thames (Bk. IV, Canto xi), never entail plot or dramatic action. The *Cantos,* on the other hand, have dramatic conflict at their very centre. Furthermore, when Spenser introduces these tapestry-like interpolations, he invariably limits them in certain characteristic ways. He never permits them to overflow from one canto to the next; neither does he introduce any of these passages without having one of the agents of the narrative present so as to bind it into the plot. Thus Scudamour enters and views the Temple of Venus (Bk. IV, Canto x); the Red Cross Knight is healed of his spiritual wounds in the House of Holiness (Bk. I, Canto x); Sir Guyon reads the chronicle of the English kings (Bk. II, Canto x); and Marinell is present at the wedding of the Medway and the Thames (Bk. IV, Canto xi). In the *Cantos of Mutability* the limitation to one canto is ignored, as the poem overflows two cantos; and there is not introduced a single human agent from the longer narrative to bind the *Cantos* to the book as a whole.

The differences between the *Cantos* and the narrative core of the *Faerie Queene* are equally compelling and far more important for an understanding of the work. First of all, the dramatic agents about whose adventures the plot of the *Faerie Queene* is built are always human or demi-human persons, while the agents of the *Cantos of Mutability* are not knights and ladies but gods and disembodied concepts. Furthermore, the agents of the *Faerie Queene* always operate within the framework of chivalry. Victory belongs to the winner in battle or tourney, and Spenser's knights characteristically fight on sight of each other. These conflicts, also, are for glory or the love of a lady. Guyon perfectly expresses this chivalric ideal in his rebuke to Mammon (II, vii, 10). The framework of a stable, though loosely defined ethical system is implicit throughout. Duessa and Archimago make no claim on the loyalties of the reader. They are mistaken and evil forces battling against a coherent value system. In the *Cantos,* on the other hand, victory comes not through armed conflict, which is indecisive and ineffectual in the struggle between Mutability and Cynthia, but through the judgment of Dame Nature. The conflict, furthermore, is not for glory, but for dominion over the entire universe.

> But all that moveth, doth mutation love:
> Therefore both you and them to me I subject prove. (VII, vii, 55)

And in the *Cantos* the whole system of order and purpose by which the universe is governed is put in serious jeopardy. Indeed, it has been stated that the claim of Mutability before Dame Nature is more convincing than that of Jove himself.[3] If, despite these differences, we still wish to maintain that the *Cantos* are organically related to the *Faerie Queene,* our final exposition must take them into serious account.

The arguments in favour of the inclusion of the *Cantos* as part of the *Faerie Queene* are all, curiously enough, of a totally different order from the arguments for their exclusion. While the latter are based on subject-matter and plot, the former are based on internal reference and poetic structure. Thus the lines,

> And, were it not ill fitting for this file,
> To sing of hills and woods, mongst warres and knights,

refer almost unmistakably to the *Faerie Queene,* as do the records of Mutability's "antique race and linage ancient," which are "registred of old in Faerie Lond." The poetic structure of the *Cantos* is identical with that in the *Faerie Queene*: they are written in the Spenserian stanza and divided into cantos in the manner of the *Faerie Queene,* with each canto summarized in a proem and introduced with several stanzas of personal comment. That a poet as inventive as Spenser would copy the exact style and mode of organization of a long epic in a brief allegorical poem is hardly to be conceived.

The only serious attempt to date the *Cantos* on the basis of direct external evidence is that of Evelyn May Albright,[4] who sought, on the basis of a letter from Gabriel Harvey to Spenser printed in Harvey's "Letter-Book," to prove that they were printed in 1579 and 1580. If Miss Albright's thesis is correct, then Harvey was severely criticizing the *Cantos* in this letter, objecting to "backward looking views of society, fantastic republics, abstract contemplations, idle dreams, and transcendentalism." Miss Albright supposes that the *Cantos* were intended as a part of the *Faerie Queene* which was discarded as a result of Harvey's criticism, that their material was later worked by Spenser into various poems, and that the *Cantos* themselves may have been reworked in Ireland before being finally abandoned. Spenser scholars have generally rejected Miss Albright's theory for the following reasons: (1) There is no proof that the letter was written to Spenser at all, as it was addressed to an allegorical name that could refer to

[3] E. Greenlaw, "Spenser and Lucretius," *Studies in Philology,* XVII, 1920, 439-64.

[4] "On the Dating of Spenser's *Mutability Cantos,*" *ibid.,* XXVI, 1929, 482-98.

someone else.[5] (2) Even if written to Spenser, there is no proof that it was concerned with a poem of Spenser's rather than a statement of his philosophical views or a complaint about the fickleness of fortune.[6] (3) If it is in reply to a poem, there is no proof that the poem is the *Cantos* and not some other, such as *The Tears of the Muses*.[7] (4) The letter does not apply to the philosophical problem of the *Cantos,* but is a plea for appetite against reason, and is not a comment on Mutability.[8] (5) Harvey's illustrations, commonplaces of Renaissance thought, virtually repeat those of Spenser, and critics do not generally use illustrations identical with those of an author in commenting on his work.[9] (6) It is difficult to explain away the great use of Irish lore and local colour as a later insertion simply by observing that they are digressions, since the *Faerie Queene* is shot through with such digressions, and Spenser's apology for inserting them is a literary convention of the times.[10] (7) There is strong internal evidence for a late date of composition, including the degree of use of feminine rhymes.[11]

Though Miss Albright has failed to explain the fact that the *Cantos* do not fit into the poetic pattern of the *Faerie Queene* as we have it, by showing them to have been written before that pattern took shape, the fact itself remains and must be recognized in any attempted explanation of the *Cantos*. Hence our problem is to discover a point in Spenser's development at which he might suddenly shift his point of view with regard to the *Faerie Queene,* strip his narrative of human characters and chivalric elements, and come to grips with the problem of the ultimate basis of the universe. I submit that such a time would be during the few weeks of Spenser's last visit to London, in 1598-9.[12]

At this time, Spenser had every reason to regard himself and his life's work as unsuccessful and prematurely cut short. Destitute and in exile, the estate at Kilcolman on which he had lavished over ten years of his life ruined and his home destroyed, Spenser was probably aware that he was a dying man, leaving his life's work, the *Faerie Queene,* unfinished, his family without means of support. We may conjecture that at this point the plan for the *Cantos of Mutability* pressed

[5]Josephine W. Bennett, "Spenser and Gabriel Harvey's *Letter-Book*," *Modern Philology,* XXIX, 1931, 163-86.

[6]H. M. Belden, "Alanus de Insulis, Giles Fletcher, and the *Mutability Cantos*," *SP,* XXVI, 1929, 131-44.

[7]*Ibid.*

[8]Douglas Bush, "The Date of Spenser's *Cantos of Mutability*," *Publications of the Modern Language Association,* XLV, 1930, 1954-7.

[9]*Ibid.*

[10]*Ibid.*

[11]E. Greenlaw, "Spenser's *'Mutabilitie,'* " *PMLA,* XLV, 1930, 702.

[12]My information with regard to the last period of Spenser's life is derived from Judson's definitive *Life of Spenser.*

itself upon Spenser's consciousness. The *Faerie Queene,* originally designed as a complex epic in twelve books, was barely half finished, and any additional work that Spenser may have done was destroyed forever at Kilcolman. In the few short weeks of life that remained to him the epic could never be finished. Furthermore, in the light of the catastrophe that had overwhelmed him, the whole chivalric tissue of knights and ladies, of jousts and tournaments would become meaningless in his eyes, the leisurely purpose of fashioning "a gentleman or noble person in virtuous or gentle discipline" too secular and worldly in the face of his imminent confrontation with God and eternity. At such a time we could understand his turning to the deeper problems of existence, where Arthegall and Calidore, Mammon and the Blatant Beast give way to Mutability and Jove, Nature and the "great Sabbaoth God," his putting aside the remaining six books of the *Faerie Queene* to write one brief poem in which he would simultaneously close his poetic accounts, declare his faith in the justice of providence, and make his final peace with God.

II

A careful examination of the *Faerie Queene* reveals that there are essentially two levels on which the allegory moves, two spheres of being, each with its own type of character and mode of activity. These two allegorical levels are related to each other in a special way, one being, as it were, contained in the other, and the passage from one to the other is always accomplished by Spenser in the same characteristic fashion throughout the *Faerie Queene.* The one sphere is that of splendid action, the other is that of the intellectual framework of the poem. On the level of action we have the characters whose conflicts and loves, missions and deceits constitute the plot of the *Faerie Queene.* The Red Cross Knight and Sir Guyon ride out in search of glory and adventure, while Duessa and Archimago plot their ruin. Britomart and Prince Arthur carry on the genuine tradition of chivalry, while Paridell and Blandamour represent pseudo-chivalry. On this level vigorous and purposeful action is characteristic of the evil characters as well as of the good. Archimago resourcefully sends to the home of Morpheus for a dream with which to deceive the Red Cross Knight (Bk. I, Canto i), and his messenger shakes Morpheus and boldly threatens him with the name of Hecate. Duessa flies to the home of Night to save the life of Sansjoy (Bk. I, Canto iv). The action is high and tense, with rapid shifts of scene and spirited conflict. The victories are triumphal, the defeats utterly abject.

Surrounding and enclosing this sphere of splendid action is another sphere, strangely static, vague in its contours, with unearthly figures moving through caves and halls in an endless sleep-walker's fashion, carrying on the same activities, repeating the same thoughts from the beginning to the end of time. In this sphere are both good and evil symbols, their main characteristic being that they are static and without will, incapable of initiating any action. The prototypes of the evil characters on the level of splendid action are Archimago and the three brothers, Sansjoy, Sansloy, and Sansfoy, those who operate through deceit and disguise, and those who mercilessly attack. The prototypes for the evil characters on the other level are Despair and Mammon, who are concerned neither to disguise themselves nor to attack, but operate through the sheer overpowering weight of their personalities. The former can be slain; the latter can only be transcended.

When we see the manner in which Spenser brought these two spheres into organic relationship, we can appreciate the measureless subtlety with which he handled the allegorical framework of the *Faerie Queene*. The characters on the second level always remain in their place, giving a tone of great stability and structural unity to the universe of the *Faerie Queene*. Whether this stability is genuine or not we will investigate later, but the tone of stability is certainly there. Despair does not pursue the fleeing Sir Trevisan: to do so would drag him onto the stage of action. He remains by his cave waiting for another victim to come near. Neither does Mammon follow Sir Guyon into the outer world. Morpheus is shaken into wakefulness by Archimago's messenger with great difficulty and promptly goes back to sleep, an amazing projection of security and inner strength. Pride makes no effort to recover the Red Cross Knight, and we can presume that his existence was forgotten the instant he left her house. The Thames marries the Medway in a slow-moving pageant that winds with a stately tempo through fifty-three stanzas in a dreamlike fashion.

This is the universe about us, immovable and impervious to change, in which action is cyclical, innovation futile. The great symbolic houses, the House of Holiness and the Castle of Alma, revolve endlessly in their self-contained routines, the inhabitants never stepping out of doors, never aging or growing younger. Fidelia and Speranza are espoused through eternity but never married, while Charissa never ceases to bring forth children. In the Garden of Adonis the acts of birth and regeneration are repeated forever (Bk. III, Canto vi). Mercilla, without challenge and without error, eternally dispenses justice (Bk. V, Canto ix).

The characters of the *Faerie Queene* only come into contact with this apparently stable and passive framework when they stumble upon it or seek it out in some way. They only enter into relation with it when they force that relation upon it, as they are the only initiators of action. Sir Guyon seeks for shelter in the Castle of Medina, where he forces himself into the conflict between Sir Hudibras and Sansloy (Bk. II, Canto ii). The Red Cross Knight comes for instruction to the House of Holiness, Sir Guyon to the Castle of Alma. They would never have been sent for. The Red Cross Knight seeks out Despair in order to best him, thus initiating the action between them (Bk. I, Canto ix), while Guyon forcibly restrains Mammon from hiding his wealth and avoiding his curiosity (II, vii, 6). When Sir Calidore approaches the graces, dancing to Colin Clout's melodies, they do not run away, as they are beyond such persons as Calidore. They simply disappear. It is significant that when Sir Guyon destroys the Bower of Bliss, he does not slay Acrasia, but merely binds her, as the natural man is probably incapable of rooting out the passions and drives that impel him. When the destruction of large and central figures takes place, such as the destruction of the dragon (Bk. I, Canto xii), Orgoglio (Bk. I, Canto viii), or Maleger (Bk. II, Canto xi), it can be interpreted as the operation of divine grace, thrusting itself upon the natural world.[13] Natural man, unaided by grace, is powerless to change the nature of things.

Indeed, this sense of the ultimate futility of human action with regard to the general structure of the universe, strong as it is at the beginning of the *Faerie Queene,* grows more intense and assumes overtones of deep pessimism in the last books that we have. Action on the human level, in sharp contrast to present-day naturalism, is meaningful, vigorous, and effective. The characters fall in love, struggle through adversity, slay or depose their enemies, and eventually are married. The hermit (Bk. VI, Canto v) presents us with a pleasant picture of a life full of achievement drawing to a rewarding close, perhaps the prototype of Spenser's ideal of the good life. But in the relation of the human characters to their universe of reference, the picture steadily grows darker and more pessimistic. The first book ends with the slaying of the dragon, the object of the mission. In the second, Acrasia is not slain, but merely bound. In the fifth book, Arthegall withdraws, his mission unaccomplished, his enemies snarling at his heels. In the sixth book, the Blatant Beast escapes altogether, and ranges the world more freely than ever. One ventures to speculate that

[13]A. S. P. Woodhouse, "Nature and Grace in the *Faerie Queene*," *English Literary History,* XVI, 1949, 221.

if Book II had been written after Book IV, Acrasia would very likely have seduced her jailer, escaped her bonds, and rebuilt her Bower of Bliss in the highest courts of the land, as Spenser certainly did not regard sensual indulgence as a weaker vice than malicious slander. But even in the relatively optimistic first books, the human protagonists are remarkably ineffectual. Mammon and Despair, Sir Hudibras and Sansloy, the House of Holiness and the Castle of Alma, even Pyrocles and Cymocles remain unaffected by the coming and going of the Red Cross Knight and Sir Guyon, as if they had never existed.[14]

Throughout the *Faerie Queene,* Spenser also seems to grow progressively less able to weld the demi-human characters into their frame of reference, yet this unity is the very basis of Spenser's allegorical method. The progressive relaxation in the accomplishment of their missions we have already noted, but the segregation of the human sphere of action occurs in a multitude of lesser ways throughout the *Faerie Queene,* as a comparison of the action of an earlier book with that of a later book will readily demonstrate. In the course of Book V, Arthegall fights Sanglier and the Pagan, drowns Lady Munera, deals justice between two brothers, is imprisoned by Radigund and rescued by Britomart, slays the Souldan, and finally slays Grantorto, all essentially human actions, without the magic, the giants, dragons, or other paraphernalia of conventional romance. In Book I, by contrast, the Red Cross Knight slays the first dragon, takes Duessa for his lady, visits the House of Pride, slays Sansfoy and Sansjoy, is captured by the giant, Orgoglio, is tempted by Despair and healed in the House of Holiness, and finally slays the great dragon besieging Una's parents. The destruction of Guile by Talus (Bk. V, Canto ix) is on a far shallower level of dramatic and allegorical power than the temptation of Despair (Bk. I, Canto ix). By Book VI, the breakdown of the allegory is complete, and the mission of the capture of the Blatant Beast, pursued in a desultory fashion and finally frustrated, masks a story that is altogether human and realistic, both in its protagonists and in its sphere of operation. Indeed, we may wonder in what fashion Spenser could ever have pushed his narrative through six more books, and what transformations could have taken place in his allegory, considering the increasing loss of variety in his allegorical method and his apparent disillusionment about the missions of his knights errant.[15]

[14]Sansloy, in Book II, is already transformed from the role he plays in Book I. In the latter, he is the demi-human, freely ranging knight, restlessly shifting from place to place, engaging and disengaging from conflicts. In Book II he is the static personification of an idea, locked eternally in the rote repetition of a single situation. In Book I his brothers could be slain; in Book II he is beyond Guyon's power.

[15]A similar analysis of Books III and IV would raise more problems than

In the light of this analysis of the *Faerie Queene,* the change that has taken place in the *Cantos of Mutability* is striking indeed. As he wrote the *Faerie Queene,* Spenser grew more realistic and pessimistic in his outlook on life. Yet in the *Cantos* we are plunged, from a narrative increasingly concentrated on the segregated sphere of human activity, into a drama of pure ideas. From an allegory of action that is increasingly ineffectual in improving inherent evil, we are given a solution of the problem of evil itself. From a narrative whose frame of reference grows increasingly unwieldy, we are given movement and dramatic conflict in the spheres themselves.

It is only by the hypothesis of some deep traumatic experience on the part of the poet that such a reversal of the whole trend of the book can be understood, such an experience as occurred during the last weeks of his life. At such a time, any conflicts that might be concealed in Spenser's frame of reference would come into relief in his mind and the human tale would give way to the divine conflict. Such contradictions remain dormant as long as the personified ideas remain static. That is why the inflexibility of Spenser's frame of reference is so crucial to the relaxed and sweeping canvas of the *Faerie Queene.* As long as Pride remains in her castle and Holiness in her house, the differences between them remain in abeyance. Movement is the *sine qua non* of a universe that comes to organic integration. This movement comes, for the first time after an epic of six books, in the very first stanza of the *Cantos of Mutability,* as though Spenser were conscious of the deep significance of the phrase, when Mutability portentously "herself began to reare." It is at this point that Spenser comes to grips with his soul in the *Faerie Queene,* for a poet who never questions his frame of reference is somehow arrested in his development. When Mutability moved, dominion over the universe was put in question, a universe that Spenser had previously taken more or less for granted.

III

Such a basic contradiction is thrown into sharp focus by a recent discussion of a frame of reference that was unquestionably in Spenser's mind throughout the writing of the *Faerie Queene,* that of nature and grace.[16] In Spenser's day, nature comprehended all of created existence in an ascending scale from inanimate matter to man as a natural

it would solve as it is unnecessary for the purposes of this essay to go into the question of the priority of Book I over Book III. Books V and VI are certainly of a later date than Books I and II, and they are sufficient for this analysis.

[16]A. S. P. Woodhouse, "Nature and Grace in the *Faerie Queene,*" on which my account of the two orders draws.

being. Grace included the supernatural or divine order, in which man participates in his religious or supernatural character. Throughout the literature of the Renaissance, these two orders are viewed in two different ways. According to one, nature is a depraved order with grace as its miraculous corrective; according to the other, nature is a benevolent order, with grace as the crown of its ascending scale of values.

These two points of view are never resolved in the *Faerie Queene*. On the one hand, there is a line of allegory which represents evil as existing deep in the nature of things and men as the playthings of fortune. There is a suggestion (IV, v, 47-54) that men have no freedom to determine their own fates, but that the length of our lives is predetermined by demonic fates, who dwell

> Downe in the bottome of the deepe Abysse,
> Where is Demogorgon in full darknesse pent,
> Farre from the view of Gods and heavens bliss,

and men are explicitly described as

> Most wretched men, whose dayes depend on thrids so vaine.

Quite significantly, Maleger is revived in battle by coming in contact with the earth, indicating the existence of some dynamic principle of evil in the earth that continuously restores his strength. Archimago (I, i, 37) and Duessa (I, v, 20) send for aid to demonic crypts in the core of the universe, cells of evil buried deep in the nature of things.

On the other hand we find the bounty and goodness of the natural world repeatedly emphasized throughout the *Faerie Queene*. The Garden of Adonis (Bk. III, Canto vi) represents a natural world that is fertile, creative, and benevolent.

> Ne needs there Gardiner to set, or sow,
> To plant or prune: for of their owne accord
> All things, as they created were, doe grow,
> And yet remember well the mightie word,
> Which first was spoken by th'Almightie lord,
> That bad them to increase and multiply:
> Ne doe they need with water of the ford,
> Or of the clouds to moysten their roots dry;
> For in themselves eternall moisture they imply.

The difference between these two world views is reflected, perhaps, in two interpretations of the nature of evil found in the *Faerie Queene*. On the one hand, evil is presented as an independent force, with its centre at the very core of the universe, as in the description of Maleger. However, if we regard the nature of the universe as wholly good, then

evil can only lie in deception or fraud, since true nature, when known, is benevolent. It is only when one mistakes apparent for real nature that one's instincts as a natural man can go wrong. This would account for the great emphasis placed by Spenser on deception as the mode of operation of evil, and the good as identical with the natural, as C. S. Lewis has explained.[17] The problem of the false and true Florimel, of the disguises of Duessa and Archimago, of the artificial and imitative character of the Bower of Bliss all reflect this consistent attitude towards evil.

These two possible views of nature are apparently used indiscriminately by Spenser throughout the *Faerie Queene*. Indeed, much of the beauty of the *Faerie Queene* lies in the grandeur of the canvas and its freedom from a rigidly consistent world view. In the *Cantos of Mutability,* however, we should expect them to come to resolution, if our hypothesis is correct. This, I believe, is the ultimate meaning of the attack of Mutability on Jove, the attack of meaningless chaos on ordered purpose. If Mutability is correct in her claim, then Despair and Pride, Night and Demogorgon, Duessa and Archimago are as fundamental to the nature of things as Una and the Red Cross Knight; if not, then they are mere instruments of a divine purpose.

It is therefore necessary, in order to understand how Spenser resolves these two world views in the *Cantos of Mutability,* to distinguish between that part of the narrative which moves on the level of nature and that part which moves on the level of grace. Spenser distinguishes very sharply between them. The first two cantos operate solely on the level of nature. The conflict between Mutability and Jove is for dominion over this universe. The evidences that Mutability cites to bolster her claim are all based on natural phenomena, from changes in matter to changes in the gods themselves. It is also of the greatest significance that the quarrel is referred to the judgment of Nature,

> This great Grandmother of all creatures bred
> Great Nature. . . .

Such a judgment can have nothing to do with the realm of grace. The final decision of Nature, which is in the spirit of Hooker and the Christian humanists, is a decision regarding dominion over this world.

> Cease therefore daughter further to aspire
> And thee content thus to be rul'd by me. . . .

It is only at this point that Nature makes her first reference to the realm of grace, and it is the reference of a nature which leads into grace as

[17] *The Allegory of Love* (London, 1948), 328.

the perfection of itself, not one which is opposed to it as something alien to itself.[18]

> But time shall come that all shall changed bee,
> And from thenceforth none no more change shall see.

It is at this point, at the beginning of the eighth canto, that Spenser, the religious man, speaks for the first time, the man who begins to contrast "Heav'n's Rule" with the rule of "all things else," an unmistakable reference to the contrast of nature and grace.[19] It has been suggested that Spenser, in this stanza, is expressing his personal reservations with regard to Nature's judgment, a view which would represent Spenser as a Lucretian sceptic.[20] The shift in judgment from Canto vii to Canto viii, however, becomes perfectly smooth and natural when it is understood as the shift from the order of nature to the order of grace. In Canto vii, writing as a natural man, he discovers that order is the law of the universe, and that the end of change is self-dilation and self-perfection. In Canto viii, writing with the deeper yearnings of a Christian, he rejects the natural order which, however perfectly it operates, is still permeated with change, mutability, and corruption. Indeed, he states quite explicitly the grounds for his rejection of the natural world:

> For all that moveth, doth in change delight.

However the world may create perfection from its corruption, nevertheless it delights in that corruption and must be rejected by the Chris-

[18]This interpretation considerably modifies that of C. S. Lewis (*The Allegory of Love,* 356), who holds that nature symbolically represents God himself. His interpretation can be accepted only in the special sense of God as the creator and legislator of the natural world; but Nature certainly cannot symbolize God, the transcendent ruler of the order of grace, who is not introduced until Canto viii.

[19]The interpretation of the last two stanzas is crucial to an understanding of the *Cantos.* Edwin Greenlaw, whose interpretation is widely at variance with that presented in this essay, has said ("Spenser's *'Mutabilitie,'*" 684): "The most perplexing problem in the interpretation of *Mutabilitie* as an expression of Spenser's own thought is presented by the two stanzas that constitute all of the eighth canto that has come down to us." Brents Stirling ("Two Notes on the Philosophy of *Mutabilitie,*" *Modern Language Notes,* L, 1935, 154-5) interprets these cantos as being essentially the same in philosophy as the preceding cantos. Presuming that Spenser accepted the neo-Platonic doctrine of emanations, he asserts that when things conquer change by "turning to themselves at length againe," they turn to their religious essence, which is the Sabbaoth God. His interpretation fails to take account of the shift in tone of these last two stanzas. The philosophy of the preceding canto was stated objectively by Nature, who goes as far as the level of nature can towards God. The doctrine of the Sabbaoth God is presented meditatively by Spenser, who begins where Nature left off:

> Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd. . . .

If there were a single neo-Platonic movement from nature to grace, then Nature would have carried the movement to completion herself, and not disappeared when her judgment was completed.

[20]E. Greenlaw, "Spenser and Lucretius."

tian. He repeats his final position regarding the relation between the two orders, namely, that nature points the way to grace, which is its perfection:

> Then gin I thinke on that which Nature sayd,
> Of that same time when no more change shall be,
> But stedfast rest of all things firmely stayd
> Upon the pillours of Eternity,
> That is contrayr to Mutabilitie:

and he closes his epic with those lines which are, as so many critics have conjectured, the dying prayer of a deeply sensitive and pious man:

> But thence-forth all shall rest eternally
> With Him that is the God of Sabbaoth hight:
> O that great Sabbaoth God, graunt me that Sabaoths sight.

IV

If our theory about the *Cantos of Mutability* is correct, and Spenser wrote them after the destruction of his home in Ireland, one would expect to find in them some reference to the catastrophic events that had just taken place. I find such reference in the tale of Faunus and Molanna, in which can be read a detailed allegory of the relations between England and Ireland during that fateful period.

Tyrone, the leader of the Irish rebellion, had, as a young man of twenty-two, been taken under the protection of the English government and sent to England, where he spent six years at court and at the household of the Earl of Leicester. Although he was established by the government in large tracts of land and granted the title of Earl of Tyrone, he turned against the English when his marriage to Mabel Bagenal was opposed by her brother Sir Henry Bagenal, Lord Marshal of the English army, thus bringing to a head many of his grievances. From that time until the rebellion his attitude towards the English was one of outwardly professing submission while preparing for war and harassing the English occupation. The English policy was marked by divided counsels until the very eve of the rebellion. Sir John Norris, for one, made a desperate attempt to negotiate a peace, while Lord Burgh was determined to prosecute the war vigorously.[21]

The digression concerning Molanna and Faunus opens with a rather ostentatious declaration in capital letters that this is the story of IRELAND, in which, in happier times, the Goddess Cynthia often found pleasure. To make the reference in Cynthia to Elizabeth quite obvious, she is described as "soveraine Queene profest Of woods and

[21] Judson, *Life of Spenser*, 194.

forests which therein abound." But of all Ireland, she is described as having particularly singled out Arlo Hill, or Galteemore, as it is actually named. This is the region of Munster, at that time the most prosperous of the Irish provinces and the scene of extensive English colonization.[22] Here the local god, Faunus, had often seen her clad, and desired to see her "naked mongst her Nymphes in privity." Faunus is none other than Tyrone, who had been repeatedly obliged to acknowledge the sovereignty of Elizabeth during his stay in England, and later, while planning his rebellion. What he desired was to see Elizabeth stripped of her power and majesty in Ireland.

To do this he had to corrupt Molanna (i.e., the Irish populace), at that time Cynthia's maid (i.e., one of Elizabeth's provinces). He therefore allured Molanna with two gifts, queen-apples (referring to the sovereignty that he would take from the queen, Elizabeth, and bestow on Ireland), and red cherries (referring to the Roman Catholic service which they would freely practise when the Church of Ireland was driven out). In addition, he promised her that she should be united to Fanchin, a neighbouring stream that she had long loved. This refers either to their national freedom, if the waters are simply the waters of freedom, or, what is more likely, the Roman Catholic Church, which the Irish believed to dispense the waters of grace.[23] The Irish succumbed to these allurements and placed him where he could watch Diana bathing without being perceived. This refers to the early days of Tyrone's rebellion, when he practised limited sovereignty in his own province of Donegal while deceiving the English with his protestations of loyalty. Faunus could not contain himself, however, and burst into loud peals of laughter. In 1595, Tyrone assumed the title of "The O'Neill," the designation of the ancient Irish kings.[24] Thereupon Diana drew him forth and she and her companions abused him heartily. He did nothing to oppose this, bearing it all in great patience and silence. This probably refers to the period from about 1595 to 1598, when Tyrone was training and equipping his army and waiting for aid from Spain. At that time a vigorous prosecution of the war by the English might have suppressed him, but he kept repeating his protestations of submission and loyalty. Cynthia's companions were divided in their counsels, as were Elizabeth's advisers. Some would have gelded Faunus, that is, carried out a ruthless policy of extermination against the Irish rebels. Others would merely have ducked him in the river,

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[23] The seriousness with which Spenser viewed the Irish desire for religious independence is indicated in his *View of the Present State of Ireland*, where it is listed as the principal cause of their unrest.

[24] Judson, *Life of Spenser*, 176.

that is, made him accept some form of submission. The policy that was finally agreed upon was to clothe Faunus in a deerskin and hunt him with their hounds, that is, to regard Tyrone as an outlaw and hunt him in open war. Their chase, however, was completely unsuccessful, as was the English campaign against Tyrone, and they retired wearily from the fray.

The only point at which the legend is not perfectly analogous to the Irish situation is that Tyrone inflicted a staggering defeat upon the English and very nearly drove them out of Ireland, while, in Spenser's narrative, Cynthia merely retired from an unsuccessful chase of Faunus. However, it can readily be understood that Spenser would try to make as light as he could of the English defeat in an epic devoted to the glorification of Queen Elizabeth, just as, in his narrative, he gave her the initiative, rather than Faunus, in deciding upon the chase; and what better means could be found to minimize the defeat than to describe the war as a mere sport, not to be taken too seriously?

Cynthia was not content with merely carrying out her punishment of Faunus, but wished to discover which of her nymphs had betrayed her. When she found that it was Molanna, or the Irish people, she overwhelmed her with stones, referring either to the withdrawal of English secular protection or to the cutting off of the Irish from grace in the Anglican communion, depending on whether the symbol of water has a secular or sacred reference. Faunus, however, succeeded in winning Fanchin's favour for Molanna and her original ambition to be united to him was consummated. Diana, full of indignation at the defection of Molanna, forsook Ireland, leaving it to wolves and thieves. The last lines of the canto,

> Since which, those woods, and all that goodly Chase,
> Doth to this day with Wolves and Thieves abound
> Which too too true that lands in-dwellers since have found,

obviously refer to recent events.[25]

When we examine Spenser's sources in Ovid's *Metamorphoses,* we see to what extent Spenser changed Ovid's stories to fit the Irish situation. The story of Faunus and Molanna is a combination of the stories of Actaeon and Diana (*Metam.* Bk. III, ll. 138 ff.) and of Arethusa and Alpheus (*Metam.* Bk. V, ll. 572 ff.). In the former story, Actaeon, wandering alone in the mountains after hunting with his friends, comes by chance upon Diana naked in her bath. Unable to avoid his gaze, she flings water into his eyes and he is transformed

[25]The Variorum Spenser, Books VI and VII, 289, notes the relationship of the last stanza to the events in Ireland, but the allegory of the entire story, so far as I know, has never been properly elucidated.

into a stag. He wanders off in uncertainty, but his hunting party catches sight of him and he is torn to bits by his own dogs after a long chase. In the latter story, Arethusa, bathing in the waters of Alpheus after hunting, attracts his love. She flees him in terror, crying for help to Diana when she cannot escape him. Diana transforms her into a fountain, and cleaves the earth and bears her away to a distant place when Alpheus tries to join his waters to hers.

The changes made by Spenser in the two stories are striking. Actaeon, the human but brave nobleman, becomes the foolish, cowardly wood-god, Faunus, the better to fit Spenser's unflattering characterization of Tyrone. Actaeon comes upon Diana by chance, but Faunus does so by design, corrupting Molanna to his purpose. Ovid's Diana shows no indecision in disposing of Actaeon, while Spenser's Diana is surrounded by quarrelling advisers. Ovid's Diana ignores Actaeon after he has been transformed into a stag, and he is pursued by the comrades with whom he once ran in hunt, while Spenser's Diana, with all her companions, pursues Faunus. Most significant of all, perhaps, Actaeon is caught and torn to bits, while Spenser sacrifices this dramatic scene and permits Faunus to escape his pursuers.

In the other story, Arethusa is loyal to Diana and is protected by her, while Molanna betrays Diana and is deserted and punished by her. Furthermore, at the end of Ovid's tale, Arethusa is still a virgin and saved from Alpheus, whom she mortally feared, while Molanna, at the end of Spenser's tale, is happily joined to Fanchin, whom she loved. When we consider these changes, many of which are contrary to what would be most effective dramatically, it seems the more probable that Spenser wrote the episode with the Irish rebellion in mind. This would make impossible any other date of composition than that proposed in this paper.

V

The theory of the *Cantos of Mutability* that has been outlined here involves our attitude towards the *Faerie Queene* as a whole. The conventional interpretation of the *Cantos* is difficult to accept because our aesthetic perceptions tell us that the *Cantos* constitute a complete, finished, and exquisitely integrated poem and not the fragmentary draft of a larger work. But by that same interpretation, the entire *Faerie Queene* is an abortive and mysterious fragment. If the interpretation of this essay is accepted, however, then the body of the *Faerie Queene* emerges, in a very real sense, as a completed work. The final integration of secular and religious ideals that Spenser might have spun out

in leisurely fashion through six more books is compressed into a little over two cantos; and the *Cantos of Mutability* are shown to be an unparalleled literary triumph, stirring in us a thrill of sympathetic excitement over a gap of four centuries. Composed in haste and under the burden of personal disaster by a dying man, they brim over with lightness, colour, *joie de vivre*, and swiftness of motion, while the world outlook that emerges is as æsthetically satisfying as the wedding of Prince Arthur and Gloriana would have been. And if, as may be suspected, the allegory of the *Faerie Queene* was losing its vitality, then only such a shift in the allegorical level could have brought the work to a successful conclusion. Read in this manner, the *Cantos of Mutability* are the crown and completion of the *Faerie Queene* and of Spenser's life as a poet and as a religious man.

MEREDITH AND GOETHE

JAMES STONE

WHY was George Meredith, like so many of the Victorian *philosophes*, reticent about the sources of his philosophy? Perhaps he believed that his idea of nature was his own creation; or perhaps he felt that he had indicated his teacher (or teachers) clearly enough for posterity. Whatever was the case, his silence has aroused much speculation. Tennyson has been named as the inspiration of the sentimental spiritualism in Meredith's early nature poems; Mary (Peacock Nicolls) Meredith has been given credit for his belief in the spirituality of love and for his courageous outlook on life; the Moravian brothers of Neuwied and Thomas Love Peacock have been suggested as possible sources of Meredith's altruism; R. H. Horne and Wordsworth have been mentioned as contributors to the poet's embryonic nature philosophy; and even Shelley, James Thomson, and August Comte have received their due for influencing Meredith in the early years of his life. All these hypotheses, it is true, are supported by the idea of nature that one finds in Meredith's poems. However, it seems to me that if one takes all these suggestions into account one must assume that Meredith's philosophy of nature was a patched-up conception. There is no evidence in Meredith's poetry to justify that assumption.

Nor is there any valid evidence to support Lionel Stevenson's assertion that Meredith did not formulate his philosophy until after Darwin had published his *Origin of Species*: "George Meredith had little perception of the idea [evolution] till the scientists announced it; but thereafter he devoted himself to it unstintingly. When he became acquainted with Darwinism, his philosophic system developed promptly and completely."[1] Mr. Stevenson, I believe, puts the matter too bluntly. The very fact that Meredith does not mention Darwin in his letters indicates that the scientist's theory had the effect perhaps of unifying the poet's already existing philosophy but not of adding anything of import to it.

That Meredith had laid the basis for his concept of nature before 1859 and that this concept was founded upon one source of wisdom, one coherent philosophy of life into which all the disturbing facts of nineteenth-century science could be fitted, is an hypothesis that explains the relative consistency of the poet's idea of nature better

[1] *Darwin among the Poets* (Chicago, 1932), 183-4.

than does any one of those advanced thus far. When I consider the logic of these assumptions, I can make no choice of oracle for George Meredith other than Goethe, the man whom Meredith himself praised as the "most enduring"[2] influence of all influences affecting his philosophy. As Meredith tells us in his letters, Goethe's faith in the unity of the real and the ideal, Goethe's belief that the ideal must be based upon the real, was the foundation of his whole philosophy of Earth: "Between realism and idealism there is no natural conflict. This completes that. . . . I hold the man who gives a plain wall of fact higher in esteem than one who is constantly shuffling the clouds. . . . Does not all science (the mammoth balloon, to wit) tell us that when we forsake earth, we reach up to a frosty, inimical Inane? For my part I love and cling to earth, as the one piece of God's handiwork which we possess. I admit that we can refashion; but of earth must be the material."[3]

II

On the basis of his faith in this unity of the subjective and objective aspects of the world Meredith fashioned a philosophy devoid of contradiction. Because he accepted Goethe's contention that "Man is born, not to solve the problems of the universe, but to find out where the problem applies, and then to restrain himself within the limits of the comprehensible,"[4] Meredith decided that his conception of the ideal in nature had to be consistent with this realistic approach to Earth. Like his teacher he insisted, therefore, that man should accept without qualification nature in her "beauty and wisdom, gentleness, joyance, and kindness,"[5] for he conceived complete acceptance of nature to be a prerequisite to human knowledge and freedom.[6]

> The voice of nature is abroad
> This night; she fills the air with balm;
> Her mystery is o'er the land;
> And who that hears her now and yields
> His being to her yearning tones,

[2]*Letters of George Meredith,* collected and edited by his son (2nd ed., London, 1912), II, 577.
[3]*Ibid.,* I, 156-7.
[4]J. P. Eckermann, *Conversations with Goethe,* Oxenford trans. (London, 1930), 120.
[5]*Pastorals.*
[6]Cf. Eckermann, *Conversations,* 157—Goethe's idea of freedom is similar to that of Meredith: "Freedom consists not in refusing to recognize anything above us, but in respecting something which is above us; for, by respecting it, we raise ourselves to it, and, by our very acknowledgment, prove that we bear within ourselves what is higher, and are worthy to be on a level with it."

And seats his soul upon her wings,
And broadens o'er the wind-swept world
With her, will gather in the flight
More knowledge of her secret, more
Delight in her beneficence,
Than hours of musing, or the lore
That lives with men could ever give![7]

Thus spoke Meredith in one of his early poems. And thus he continued to speak even after Darwinism had made its impact upon his thought, for he saw clearly that his concept of ethical evolution depended upon his belief in nature's beneficence:

Count Nature devilish, and accept for doom
The chasm between our passions and our wits![8]

That is, Meredith, though he began after 1859 to lay great stress on man's struggle with "the elements, whose dower First sprang him,"[9] retained his firm belief that if man would but make proper use of his free will he should discern the essential goodness of Earth. In order to avoid destroying a well-founded philosophy, the poet ignored at least two of Darwin's scientific observations: that nature was amoral and that the nature of man was necessarily deterministic.

Nevertheless, Meredith did not divorce man's free will from nature; he stated rather that free will owed its very existence to the immutable law of Earth that could not be read as an anthropomorphic reflection of man's changeable feeling. In other words, freedom of choice was for Meredith, as for Milton and Goethe, an either-or proposition; man must either conform with nature's law or perish. Yet the Victorian poet insisted that there was a choice. For he believed that man could never evolve ethically unless he accepted the responsibility for his mistakes. Too long, said Meredith, had man placed the blame on nature's law, which, though unalterable and severe,[10] was never at fault; man's inability to perceive nature's true purpose tempted mankind to see blemishes in nature, but these faults were just reflections of man's ego and not imperfections in the Mother.[11]

And what was this one law of nature that both Meredith and Goethe praised so highly? For Goethe it had been an all-pervasive law

[7]*South-West Wind in the Woodland.*
[8]*The Sage Enamoured.*
[9]*Earth and Man.*
[10]Cf. Goethe (Eckermann, *Conversations,* 294): "nature understands no jesting; she is always true, always serious, always severe; she is always right, and the errors and faults are always those of man."
[11]Cf. Goethe (*ibid.,* 75): "Nature goes her own way . . . and all that to us seems an exception is really according to order."

of change, "a great law which pervades all nature and on which all life and all the joy of life depend . . . [a law having to do] not only with our other senses, but also with our higher spiritual nature."[12] Hence Meredith also recognized change, exemplified by alternating life and death, as nature's one law of necessity. Even before 1850 the English poet could look upon death as prophetic of more life, as a means of producing life; the death of the snowdrop was to him not an occasion for grief, for it heralded the birth of the rose.[13] And it was but a short step from this early idea to Meredith's later justification of death as a sacrifice and a service to future generations,[14] for the later conception was merely an extension of the earlier observation that death was a purposeful manifestation of the commendable prodigality of nature. Meredith's faith in the goodness of the law of change was as strong as that of Goethe; and Goethe's, as we know, was worshipful: "Let people serve Him who gives to the beast his fodder, and to man meat and drink as much as he can enjoy. But I worship Him who has infused into the world such a power of production that, when only the millionth part of it comes to life, the world swarms with creatures to such a degree that war, pestilence, fire, and water cannot prevail against them. That is *my* God!"[15] Malthusian and Darwinian proofs of waste in nature could have no effect on a Meredith who looked upon death in this way. Certainly Darwin's stress on the struggle for existence did introduce into Meredith's philosophy a note of fortitude to balance that of joy, but it did not bring about any change in Meredith's Goethian belief that man, reading nature aright, should see in Earth's stern law of development a confirmation of nature's love and spirit:

> I know that since the hour of birth,
> Rooted in earth,
> I have looked above,
> In joy and in grief,
> With eyes of belief,
> For love.
> A mother trains us so.
> But the love I saw was a fitful thing;
> I looked on the sun
> That clouds or is blinding aglow:
> And the love around had more of wing
> Than substance, and of spirit none.

[12] *Ibid.*, 169.
[13] *The Wild Rose and the Snowdrop.*
[14] Cf. Goethe (Eckermann, *Conversations*, 294): "The Divinity works in the living, not in the dead; in the becoming and changing, not in the become and fixed."
[15] *Ibid.*, 389.

Then looked I on the green earth we are rooted in,
Whereof we grow,
And nothing of love it said,
But gave me warnings of sin,
And lessons of patience let fall,
And told how pain was bred,
And wherefore I was weak,
And of good and evil at strife,
And the struggle upward of all,
And my choice of the glory of life:
Was love farther to seek?[16]

Meredith, seeing this spirit behind outer law, could therefore make of life and death an act of nature's love:

Love took my hand when hidden stood the sun
To fling his robe on shoulder-heights of snow.
Then said: There lie they, Life and Death in one.
Whichever is, the other is, but know,
It is thy craving self that thou dost see,
Not in them seeing me.[17]

III

Because Meredith's conception of man's place in nature's scheme was consistent with his recognition of the unchanging law of change, he conceived man's first duty to be one of acting in conformance with this vital law. Therefore, like Goethe[18] (and unlike Wordsworth), he emphasized physical activity and joy in nature rather than mere passive acceptance of her benevolence. Even Darwin's sombre picture of the precariousness of man's existence could not dim Meredith's belief that man should live joyfully and actively: "Live with the world. No cloister. No languor. Play your part. Fill the day. Ponder well and loiter not. Let laughter brace you. Exist in everyday communion with Nature. Nature bids you take all, only be sure you learn how to do without."[19]

Man's second duty, as Meredith saw it, was a corollary of the first one. Because the poet perceived that transience was part of nature's law, he felt that man should not barter present joy for the hopes and fears inspired by the spectre of Time. That is, Meredith contended that only by living for the moment could man ever hope to attain to the balance of the real and the ideal either through the harvesting of the results of his present toil by his progeny or through

[16] *In the Woods.* [17] *Hymn to Colour.*

[18] See *Truth and Poetry,* Oxenford trans. (London, 1897), 234: "A man remains of consequence, not so far as he leaves something behind him, but so far as he acts and enjoys, and rouses others to action and enjoyment."

[19] R. E. Sencourt, *The Life of George Meredith* (London, 1929), 103.

his own creation of the mean in the heat of the magic moment that embraces all time. Living for and working in the moment, Meredith believed, could make possible the only kinds of immortality man might expect,[20] that is, either some physical evidence in his children (and in their descendants) that he had worked for the good of the race or—and Meredith believed this type of immortality to be even finer than the first—a contribution to posterity of the finely balanced idea that is evolved by the best men (Shakespeare, for example) in creative moments:

> Spirits, whose memory is our vital air,
> Through the great love of Earth they had: lo, these,
> Like beams that throw the path on tossing seas,
> Can bid us feel we keep them in the ghost,
> Partakers of a strife they joyed to share.[21]

This faith in creative development led Meredith to place mankind at the top of nature's scale,[22] for it supported the poet's belief that man was capable of furthering nature's scheme of change and evolution better perhaps than nature herself. Yet Meredith saw clearly that in actuality man was not performing his duties with any degree of efficiency because he was wasting time in an attempt to ascertain the reasons for his own existence. Therefore Meredith, like Goethe before him,[23] condemned this vain questioning; he constantly reminded his contemporaries that questions such as "Whither?" or "Whence?" were selfish queries that both slowed nature's and man's complementary tides of evolution and prevented man from assuming his true position at the right hand of nature herself.

> Then let our trust be firm in Good,
> Though we be of the fasting;
> Our questions are a mortal brood,
> Our work is everlasting.
> We children of Beneficence
> Are in its being sharers;
> And Whither vainer sounds than Whence,
> For word with such wayfarers.[24]

[20]Cf. Goethe (Eckermann, *Conversations,* 287): "To me the eternal existence of my soul is proved from my idea of activity; if I work on incessantly till my death, nature is bound to give me another form of existence when the present one can no longer sustain my spirit."

[21]*To a Friend Lost.*

[22]Cf. Goethe (Eckermann, *Conversations,* 391): the Deity "is Reason, is Understanding itself. Therewith are all creatures penetrated; and man has so much of it that he can recognize parts of the highest."

[23]See *Truth and Poetry,* 168: "all we can do in the light car of our destiny is 'in cool self-possession to hold the reins with a firm hand, and to guide the wheels, now to the left, now to the right, avoiding a stone here, a precipice there.' We don't know whither or whence."

[24]*The Question Whither.*

IV

Meredith, following Goethe's lead, thus came to regard ethical evolution as the result primarily of man's willingness to work without demanding personal immortality as a reward for his toil. Because he held with Goethe that "This preoccupation with immortality is for people . . . who have nothing to do"[25] and because he had faith in the ability of humanity to evolve under the guidance of nature, Meredith could not concede that man's lot needed any justification. And since he did not agree with Darwin that self-preservation was the basic evolutionary urge, he could see no reason why man should desire a non-earthly reward. The poet's belief that the force behind evolution was altruism (or co-operation) rather than egotism (or self-preservation) made transcendentalism unnecessary to his philosophy.

Meredith apparently apprehended this connection between altruism and evolution well before 1859. At least, the following observation made by the poet in the *Monthly Observer* (*c.* 1850) convinces me that he was aware of the relationship: "The universe . . . is but a succession of links, and we are all united in nobility and gentleness and love."[26] This statement, when considered along with a similar one from an early poem, *The Two Blackbirds,* to the effect that "The ebb and flow of Nature's tide" is "A self-forgetful sympathy," constitutes strong evidence that Goethe,[27] not Darwin, was the inspirer of Meredith's unscientific concept of evolution.

Moreover, the several parts of Meredith's theory of ethical evolution may well be Goethian in origin. Let us consider, for example, Goethian parallels to Meredith's belief that struggle was the means man should use to evolve ethically. Goethe certainly had no inkling of the Darwinian "struggle for existence." Yet he did stress the need for struggle in the development of man's whole being: ". . . it is in conflict with natures opposed to his own that a man must collect his strength to fight his way through; and thus all our different sides are brought out and developed so that we soon feel ourselves a match for every foe."[28] And he expressed a firm belief that nature would yield her secrets only to the man who had achieved this balance of

[25]Eckermann, *Conversations,* 45.

[26]Sencourt, *Meredith,* 27 (quoted from an unpublished MS in Widener Library at Harvard).

[27]Cf. Goethe on altruism in birds (Eckermann, *Conversations,* 412): "Did not God inspire the bird with this all-powerful love for its young, and did not similar impulses pervade all animate nature, the world could not subsist. But this is the divine energy everywhere diffused, and divine love everywhere active."

[28]*Ibid.,* 59.

the various sides of his nature: "The man incapable of appreciating her she despises; and only to the apt, the pure, and the true does she resign herself, and reveal her secrets."[29] In other words, Goethe was in favour of a struggle for balance that would lead man to a proper appreciation of essential altruism. Is not Meredith's idea of struggle, though it is tinged with Darwinism, basically the same as this concept of Goethe's? Nowhere did Meredith imply that ethical evolution involves a struggle for existence. His "Triad" of blood, brain, and spirit represented instead the ultimate balance of selfless instinct, intelligence, and altruism; and his "fittest" were not those men who had survived through natural selection, but rather those who had worked in life to attain this perfect balance so that present and future generations of humanity might approach closer and closer to the desirable mean:

> If that thou hast the gift of strength, then know
> Thy part is to uplift the trodden low;
> Else in the giant's grasp until the end
> A hopeless wrestler shall thy soul contend.[30]

The actual elements of Meredith's Triad, those constituents of the balance to be attained through struggle with self, also, I do not doubt, had their origin with Goethe. The Meredithian conception of "blood," for example, as an essential, though the least important, part of man's being, echoed a similar belief of Goethe's: "The separation of the sensual from the moral, which in the complicated, cultivated world sunders the feelings of love and desire, produces . . . an exaggeration which can lead to no good."[31] Thus Meredith and Goethe both contended that "honest passion" was necessary to the ethical balance; and they both emphasized the need to prevent this beneficial force of blood being rendered impotent by the selfish impulses of egotism and sentimentality. The English poet, in attacking the sentimentalist for letting the "scaly dragon of self" frighten him away from the reality of nature's struggle for survival (which was but part of the law of change for Meredith)—

> Hawk or shrike has done this deed
> Of downy feathers, a cruel sight.
> Sweet sentimentalist, intercede
> With Providence: it is not right![32]—

was merely restating Goethe's view on the matter, for Goethe also had had in him a "cross-grained humour . . . to hoot everything senti-

[29] *Ibid.*, 294.
[30] *The Burden of Strength.*
[31] Goethe, *Truth and Poetry*, 503.
[32] *In the Woods.*

mental, and half-despairingly to cleave to inevitable reality."[33] And, in condemning the egoist as a "distempered devil of self,"[34] Meredith was but particularizing Goethe's warning of the danger of "elevating oneself to the Absolute and sacrificing everything to the carrying out of an idea."[35] Goethe's suggestion that a desirable balance of blood, brain, and spirit does exist,[36] rather than Darwin's scientific theory of evolution, was doubtless the source of Meredith's faith in the evolutionary power of that Triad:

> . . . grasp
> Very sap of the vital in this:
> That from flesh unto spirit man grows
> Even here on the sod under sun. . . .[37]

V

Let me repeat that for Meredith ethical evolution, though a product of man's free will, was part of nature's benevolent and vital plan. The difficult struggle for improvement, symbolized for Meredith by the turbulent wind above the pine, the race of life which drops its dead while it exalts its living, was closely related to the law of change, the law of life and death so well exemplified by the pine tree quietly dropping its non-fertilized seed:

> A wind sways the pines,
> And below
> Not a breath of wild air:
> All still as the mosses that glow
> On the flooring and over the lines
> Of the roots here and there.
> The pine-tree drops its dead:
> They are quiet as under the sea.
> Overhead, overhead,
> Rushes life in a race,
> As the clouds the clouds chase:
> And we go,
> And we drop like the fruits of the tree,
> Even we,
> Even so.[38]

[33] Goethe, *Annals*, Oxenford trans. (London, 1897), 195.
[34] *Earth and Man.*
[35] Eckermann, *Conversations*, 349.
[36] *Ibid.*, 295-6; Goethe praises Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and then goes on to say, "but the circle is not yet complete. Now some able man should write the *Critique of the Senses and Understanding of Man.*" Was Meredith aspiring to be Goethe's "able man"?
[37] *A Faith on Trial.*
[38] *Dirge in Woods.*

Because of his belief in this relationship Meredith saw that man's objective of attaining to the ideal through the real was feasible only if man recognized an all-inclusive unity—nature, God, and man had to be all of a piece. Hence the poet could readily agree with Goethe that "The God who stands in immediate connection with nature, and owns and loves it as his work, seemed to him the proper God,"[39] for he conceived of God as being indistinguishable from Earth, to which both he and Goethe assigned ethical will as well as creative force. Their God was the pure spirit of altruism that existed in man (if he could but see it) and in nature. There was, however, one small difference between Goethe's God and Meredith's: Meredith's Supreme Being was as much an outcome of the poet's concept of ethical evolution as of Goethian pantheism. God for Meredith was both the third member of the Triad and the living spirit in nature. And yet both these definitions of God had been in Meredith's mind during the formative years when Goethe's influence was so strong. Meredith had merely used Darwinism to make more definite the ethical implications of Goethe's philosophy. Hence God remained the spirit of nature whether Meredith approached Him either by way of Goethian naturalism or by way of evolution, for Meredith's faith in the oneness of the real and the ideal worlds made the two conceptions of God identical with each other.

It is reasonable to conclude then that this Goethian idea of Earth's unity was the Meredithian belief that stood firm in the face of all conflicting thought (Darwinism included) of the Victorian period. Meredith could always believe in nature's beneficent spirit, the divine "Over-Reason" which was God, either through a joyous faith in ethical evolution that involved stoical recognition of struggle or through a courageous acceptance of nature's stern law of necessity, behind which the poet could discern joy, sacrifice, and love; for both approaches were consistent with his view of the real and ideal worlds as a basic identity, as a fundamental example of the mean which he and Goethe saw in every phase of nature's completeness.

[39] *Truth and Poetry*, 30.

THE RECENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE FRENCH-CANADIAN NOVEL

GUY SYLVESTRE

THE literary life of Canadians is in no way limited to the publication and assimilation of the works of our best writers and thus it is not necessarily the most representative books of our native authors which are the most widely read and constitute the spiritual nourishment of our community. Our two cultural groups are the inheritors of great previously established cultures and it is a fact that the Canadian general public reads and discusses the works of the mother countries' writers, as well as the best-sellers south of the border, in preference to those of Canadian writers. Since our early days—and this is a normal development in a community emerging from colonial status to full nationhood—French Canadians have looked to Paris rather than to Montreal or Quebec, as English Canadians have looked to London or New York rather than to Toronto, Vancouver, or Winnipeg, for intellectual nourishment. For some years, however, and particularly since the last war, we have been less indifferent to the efforts of our best authors. In isolating us from Paris, and in making more difficult cultural imports from London, Edinburgh, and Dublin, the war had the effect of forcing us, almost in spite of ourselves, to take more thought of our national values, and the unprecedented success achieved abroad by some of the best novelists and poets of the two languages gives reason for hope that their works will eventually be accorded as much attention at home as those of the major foreign writers.

Yet it is still true that the general public in Canada prefers the works of great (and sometimes lesser) French, English, and American authors to even the best of our native books. Publishers and booksellers in Montreal and Toronto produce and sell many more European or American books than Canadian, which is natural if one considers the obvious superiority of the major European and American authors over ours. This is a situation which, I submit, is a happy one inasmuch as it contributes to the enrichment of our two cultures and the maintenance of the necessary interchanges between fathers and sons; but at the same time it is an unhappy one inasmuch as it perpetuates a colonial complex which we must overcome if we are to reach full maturity in the cultural as well as the political fields.

Now, it is beyond question that we should endeavour to become

more and more familiar with the great works of all nations; but, if we have much to learn from them, we must also be strong enough to assimilate only what suits us and to refuse what is unsuitable. The recent growth of our literature is accompanied by an inner crisis, the most obvious symptom of which is the perennial debate between those who would like to see our writers take a place in one of the various European literary schools and those who urge us to find in ourselves the necessary powers to create a distinctive literature. If we are to create a great and distinctive literature, we must not retire within ourselves but we must also not blindly swallow whatever comes from abroad; we must make every effort to discover and express what has a universality of appeal in our indigenous traditions and ways of life. If our literature is at once profoundly human and authentically Canadian, it will succeed in becoming part of the cultural birthright of the Western world. I do not believe it yet has; but some recent works indicate that the day when it will succeed may not be very far off.

By speaking and writing the same language, our French-Canadian writers are closer to the authors of France than to any others. Yet by means of this common speech, the contemporary French and French-Canadian writers have to express realities, events, and individual as well as collective feelings and ideals which are at times quite dissimilar. It is obviously not possible to forget in a day the European inheritance, but three hundred years of life on this new continent, a different climate, and the closeness of 150,000,000 Anglo-Saxons, have made French Canadians a people in many respects unlike the French nation of today. And, much as they have to learn from their *confrères* in Paris, it is not so much by imitating others as by developing to the maximum native values, by being deeply conscious of native problems, and by approaching them in their own way that French-Canadian writers will create a literature authentically theirs, taken from their own flesh, blood, and soil. The enthusiasm which greeted the recent publication in Canada, in France, and in the United States of some of their best novels clearly proves that, with themes and approaches distinctly Canadian, our writers can also attain a universality of appeal which is the mark of all great works of art. This universality of appeal our books must achieve, if we are to take our place on the literary map of the world.

The reasons for our failure thus far to attain universality have been ably explored by the late E. K. Brown and by Desmond Pacey and, more recently and at greater length, by the members of the

Massey Commission. One might sum them up by saying that, despite our political and economic coming of age, we are still cultural colonies, that our writers lack confidence in themselves, that their environment is not yet well prepared to respond adequately to great works of art, and that the pioneer spirit still prevails in most of our communities. The writer is still considered more or less as a stranger in the city, and the recent strides made in the field of natural sciences, most welcome in themselves, have nevertheless contributed much to maintain our writers, and in general all those who work in the field of the humanities, in a rather obscure condition. These factors, I submit, contribute a great deal to explain our intellectual immaturity, which is at the root of all our shortcomings in every aspect of creative writing. There is no deep-rooted literary tradition in Canada and our writers must start from almost nothing and without much support from their fellow-citizens create their own themes as well as their own instruments. This situation has obtained in colonial societies of the past, and the recent achievements of some of our best authors are an invitation to have faith that Canadian literature, English as well as French, is beginning to emerge from its colonial phase.

It is a recognized fact that none of the few French-Canadian novels of the nineteenth century has any interest nowadays other than documentary or sociological. The most representative are recorded here only to indicate the main trends that prevailed formerly and to emphasize the progress achieved within a century of effort. The first novel ever written and published by a French-Canadian is *L'Influence d'un livre,* by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé, junior, the son of the author of *Les Anciens Canadiens.* The only interesting thing about this novel is the date of its publication, 1837. Seven years later appeared a second novel, *Les Fiancés de 1812,* by Joseph Doutre, and nine years later, in 1846, a third one made its appearance, *Charles Guérin,* by Pierre Chauveau. The interest of these two novels is pretty much of the same order as that of the first. Thus, before the end of the second half of the last century, there appeared only three novels in French Canada; only between 1862 and 1867 appeared the first five novels which are still readable, though with not much enjoyment. *Jean Rivard,* by Antoine Gérin-Lajoie came out in two parts in 1862 and 1864; *Les Anciens Canadiens* by Philippe Aubert de Gaspé was first published in 1863, *Une de perdue, deux de trouvées* by Georges Boucher de Boucherville in 1865, *Jacques et Marie* by Napoléon Bourassa in 1866; and in 1867 Joseph Marmette published his first novel, *Charles et Eva.* With the exception of Marmette, all the authors

mentioned wrote one single novel; the only two which have any real significance are *Jean Rivard* and *Les Anciens Canadiens*. Gérin-Lajoie's story is, however, less a novel than a sort of monograph describing the efforts of a pioneer to organize a rural community, and de Gaspé's book is a kind of chronicle which the author wrote in order to keep for future generations a true image of the ways of life of the French-Canadian *seigneur* and *habitant* at the turn of the century. It is not a great novel, but it is a charming old book and a suitable companion to Kirby's *The Golden Dog*. It is to be emphasized about this first group of what I hesitate to call novelists that, with the exception of Gérin-Lajoie, all their novels were historical novels, and this is important to remember, for, as will be seen, the predominance of the historical novel over all other sorts was to be maintained well into the present century. Marmette—and Laure Conan was soon to join him—devoted most of his efforts to trying to revive in his novels the most dramatic moments of our past history. The historical novel is no worse than other kinds, but when it prevails to the extent it did, it is a clear indication that these pioneers had not enough powers in themselves to create their own subjects and had to go back to history for their themes. To these first story-tellers, the novel was not mainly a work of art, but merely an instrument by means of which they could express their religious, social, or economic ideas as an inspiration for their fellow-citizens. If I add that, with the exception of *Les Anciens Canadiens,* all these stories were poorly constructed and expressed, this should dispose of this period of beginnings; indeed, these books have no interest but the documentary or historical, they have no literary value. It is not surprising that this is so; the contrary would indeed be astonishing.

It was many years before the French-Canadian novel started to emerge from this stage of infancy; in fact, it took two more generations before it attained a reasonable standard. The novels published between 1875 and 1920 were as a rule in no way superior to those of the pioneers. There were surprisingly few novels written between these two dates, and the only ones which deserve any comment are those of Laure Conan. Besides her historical novels, Laure Conan wrote *Angeline de Montbrun,* the first novel written in French Canada which may be considered a psychological novel. It is far from a good novel, but it is the first to contain more than a mere description of facts. The main character has an inner life, and *Angeline de Montbrun* has on that account a human value which one would fail to find in the stories referred to above. However, only

after the First World War did the French-Canadian novel start to develop in a really interesting manner.

Two main factors explain this sudden development. The first is the publication of Louis Hémon's *Maria Chapdelaine,* which clearly indicated to our future novelists the possibilities in the observation and dramatization of the life of our pioneers, and which placed before them an achievement they could endeavour to imitate. Hémon's novel contributed a great deal to the formation of the regional school in French Canada. The second factor is the First World War which had the local effect of modifying the structure of the Quebec community by making a traditionally rural province a great industrial one. The social transformations it produced had a definite and deep effect on our cultural life in necessitating the multiplication of schools, colleges, and universities as well as of public libraries, newspapers, and magazines to respond to the demands of an increased urban population with much greater financial means than before. These political, social and economic improvements were soon reflected in the cultural developments that have permitted similar progress in the literary field. As will be seen later, the Second World War was also accompanied by such improvements in creative writing, and French-Canadian literature is still forging ahead.

It should here be pointed out that from the beginning to the years which preceded the last war, poetry has always been on a higher level in French Canada than the novel. For three or four generations, our story-tellers did not, on the whole, constitute as imposing a group as did Crémazie, Fréchette, Garneau, Beauchemin, and Nelligan, or later Morin, Chopin, Delahaye, Choquette, and DesRochers. But with the successive publication of the first novels of Grignon, Savard, Ringuet, and Desrosiers, the novel ranked first in our literary efforts and the balance is still in its favour, thanks to novelists such as Charbonneau, Germaine Guèvremont, Gabrielle Roy, Roger Lemelin, and Robert Elie.

The social changes which were brought about in the structure of the French-Canadian community by its participation in the First World War were soon reflected in most of the novels which came out between 1922 and 1933. While most French-Canadian novels had until then generally been narratives, in which spectacular events and picturesque settings were the chief elements, the novels I have just referred to were mainly inspired by national, social, or economic problems to which more thought was then being given. *L'Appel de la race,* by Alonié de Lestre, and *Marcel Faure,* by Jean-Charles

Harvey, for instance, were inspired respectively by the Ontario Separate School problem and by the influx of foreign capital into the province of Quebec. These two novels, representative of this new trend in the French-Canadian novel, were much better written than those which had appeared before, but they were at the same time rather poor novels for their characters were but mouthpieces for the authors and had no life of their own. The social transformations were also interpreted in other novels such as *André Laurence,* by Pierre Dupuy, and the first romances of Harry Bernard and Rex Desmarchais, in which were treated for the first time in French Canada such conditions as those of the writer in a pioneer community, or of married people of different creed, race, or social rank. These novels were among the first in Canada to deal with inner problems but they were not yet accomplished enough to put French Canada on the literary map of the world. It is true that *Les Demi-civilisés,* by Jean-Charles Harvey, *La Chesnaie,* by Rex Desmarchais, and also *La Chair décevante,* by Jovette-Alice Bernier were more promising than the bulk of our fiction, but they were not quite as good as novels which were to appear between 1933 and 1939 over the signatures of Claude-Henri Grignon, Félix-Antoine Savard, and Ringuet, and which were to give a new flavour to our regional school.

Robert Choquette was one of the pioneers of this revival of the regional school, with *La Pension Leblanc,* which was meant to be a composite portrayal of the Laurentian villages but was rather a detailed analysis of the soul of the two main characters. In his radio sketches, *Le Curé de village* and *Les Velder,* Robert Choquette has shown that he is a writer of quality and a good observer of our customs, but these two *romans-fleuves* lack unity too much to be considered major achievements. Claude-Henri Grignon, on the other hand, was one of the first to achieve, in *Un homme et son péché,* the unity of action, atmosphere, and style which is essential to a high standard in fiction. Had he succeeded in developing to a greater extent the rather meagre plot of this novel and in realizing a more elaborate characterization of Séraphin and Donalda Poudrier, Grignon would have achieved a major novel. The quality of the narration, of the psychology, and of the writing make this short novel one of the first literary achievements in French Canada that has any chance of surviving for a long time to come.

Elaborate complexity of plot is one of the great assets of *30 Arpents,* which remains the masterpiece of Ringuet, as well as one of the four or five major French-Canadian novels. *30 Arpents*

is a magnificent description of the hard and miserable life of an unfortunate rural family in a small community, and it is a tragic story written in the realistic vein after Zola. The plot is coherent, the various parts of the novel are effectively balanced, the psychology is sound and the characters well portrayed, and the writing is colourful and forceful. It is a genuine work of art and the first of our novels that will survive the test of time. *Le Poids du jour,* on the other hand, falls short of our expectations; it is written in a more conventional style and the characters are unlifelike. This time, the author has not succeeded in dominating his complex theme, derived from the inner crises undergone by a French Canadian, born in a small village, who establishes himself in Montreal, where he remains a misfit unable to maintain within himself or to create between himself and his new environment the unity of thought and purpose without which any human destiny is a failure.

If Ringuet's approach to life and art is naturalistic and pessimistic, Félix-Antoine Savard's two narratives are, on the contrary, highly poetical in every respect. True, neither *Menaud maître-draveur* nor *La Minuit* is a novel in the strict sense of the word. They are respectively an epic and a parabolic narrative wherein even the most prosy aspects of life are transposed to a symbolic plane on which the action is constantly endowed with a sublime virtue. Here the characters are mere instruments to which the author has recourse in order to express his own ideas or to indulge in lyrical passages. Indeed the characters are not portrayed well enough to make real novels of these two books. The author is more a poet than a novelist, and the high quality of his writing is the only ground on which his works deserve to survive. Félix-Antoine Savard's poetical prose is indeed much superior to that of any other French-Canadian writer and, in this respect, he occupies a unique place in our literature.

The great poetical novel which Savard failed to achieve because he failed to portray true characters in the beautiful settings he has so ably depicted, Germaine Guèvremont achieved with *Le Survenant* and *Marie-Didace,* the first two parts of a trilogy. Here, it is the characters who give to the novel its unity of action, atmosphere; the landscape is not merely a background incidental to the characters, but both are in harmony. The behaviour of the characters is always closely connected with their environment, their conversation is in tune with their daily life, and the outlander himself is fully integrated in the small rural community which his short stay throws into confusion. No other French-Canadian novelist, with the possible exception of

Gabrielle Roy, has achieved as yet such a unity of atmosphere and action, a style so distinctly Canadian, and Mme. Guèvremont's contribution towards the development of a distinctly indigenous style is without parallel.

It is worthy of mention here that two of the most remarkable and most deeply human novels written in Canada have been produced by women. While *Le Survenant* has a rural setting, Gabrielle Roy's *Bonheur d'occasion* is a realistic description of the difficult life of the common people of a Montreal suburb. The plot deals with a poor waitress who, forsaken by an ambitious young man with whom she has fallen in love, marries a soldier shortly to embark for overseas, so that her child may have a father. The novel is true in all its details; destitution, disease, undernourishment, lack of heat, frequent moves, and all kinds of bereavements brought about by the pre-war depression, are not called up by the novelist with the view of supporting a social thesis; they have all been observed by the author and described with strict objectivity. None of the characters is heroic and none of their actions is praised to the skies or harshly blamed. The author never intervenes in the narration and *Bonheur d'occasion* is thus a species of reporting so true, so alive, and so human that it ranks among our four or five major novels. Gabrielle Roy's style is rather terse, familiar, poor in colour; but the accumulation of true and moving circumstances is deeply impressive. As with Ringuet, Gabrielle Roy's first book remains her best so far: *La Petite Poule d'eau* is not a novel, but comprises two short stories.

Roger Lemelin's first novel, *Au pied de la pente douce,* is also a description of the prosaic daily life of the common people in a poverty-stricken parish, but it lacks the unity of atmosphere and style which contributes so much to the greatness of *Bonheur d'occasion*. The two parts of this novel are, indeed, almost separate, the second drawing our attention to the rivalry of two young men for the conquest of the same girl, while the first is a brilliant satire upon the whimsicalities of some devout people. Like *Bonheur d'occasion,* Lemelin's first novel is realistic, but it is in no way serene or plain. Episodes such as the parade of the parish band, the wrestling match, the meeting of the political club, the parish bingo, and the high mass are finished satire of the parochialism which survives in Quebec. The main qualities of the novel are the fine characterization and the colouring of the dialogue, but the structure of the novel is heterogeneous and the writing is too frequently faulty. *Les Plouffe,* written in the same vein, is a much more impressive achievement than was *Au pied de la*

pente douce. This time, the plot is more ably conducted and such picturesque scenes as the visit to Quebec City of the King and Queen or the strike at the newspaper are among the most colourful of their kind in French-Canadian letters. Lemelin is mainly a satirist and his novels bring a new flavour to a literature which, on the whole, has been much too austere.

These social frescoes which Ringuet, Guèvremont, Roy, and Lemelin have given us of some sections of our contemporary community, Léo-Paul Desrosiers has achieved for two remote periods of Canadian history. Desrosiers believes that the history of all nations is "the best and the greatest of all romances, provided we read it with some imagination." His first narrative, *Nord-Sud,* was but a succession of sketches of the customs of the French Canadians in the middle of the last century. *Les Engagés du grand portage,* on the other hand, is not only a large, coherent, and lively fresco inspired by the adventures of the *coureurs des bois* and the strife of the fur-traders in the Northwest Territories in the first years of the nineteenth century, but is at the same time a thorough study of the development of cruelty and pride in the soul of an ambitious man. The plot of this novel is well planned, the narration strongly built, and the characters are finely portrayed. The same qualities are to be found again in *Les Opiniâtres,* which recreates the adventures of the first settlers of Trois-Rivières. This important novel is animated by the virtues and high ideals of those pioneers who took possession of this great country of ours, mastered its wilderness, and were the first to bring to the northern part of the New World the birthright of Western civilization. Léo-Paul Desrosiers is the only French-Canadian novelist who has reached a high standard in the historical novel, for he is the only one so far who has succeeded in recreating the whole atmosphere of a period and has not contented himself with a mere description of colourful events or picturesque ways of life.

All the novels we have recorded so far were mainly concerned with the life of a community, whether past or present, in preference to that of an individual character. Robert Charbonneau's novels, on the other hand, are studies of the inner man. To stress this variety of approach, Roger Lemelin, for instance, has confessed that when he starts writing he feels himself "in front of a shapeless body, a species of nebulous ball" of which he tries to discern "the essence, the veins, the organs, the living strengths" and from which he forms characters. In spite of their personal peculiarities, these characters remain parts of the whole community to which they belong. Robert Charbonneau

seems to proceed otherwise, and to draw from the soul of his principal character a drama which remains inward, even when his hero is at strife with his environment. In Charbonneau's first novels, hardly anything happens but a succession of psychological changes in the two or three principal characters, and the essential tragedy concerns God and the individual before society. Charbonneau has endeavoured to pay more attention to the outer world, especially in *Les Désirs et les jours,* but his failure in this respect is an additional proof that his natural themes are to be found in the inner life, in the analysis of characters filled with hesitation, uneasiness, fruitless meditations and projects, and handicapped by complexes and restraints developed by a backward education and a materialistic society. The insight of the author makes up for the lack of animation in his novels, but it is unfortunate that, while too many of our novelists content themselves with descriptions of the outward manifestations of their characters, Charbonneau devotes his attention too exclusively to the exposition of inward impulses and struggles. He possesses all the qualities that are wanting in most of our novels to make them great spiritual documents as well as great works of art, but his characters lack those more humble and more tangible qualities which are just as essential as the spiritual ones if they are to seem representative of all aspects of human nature.

This spiritual insight is also to be found in the novels of Jacqueline Mabit, Clément Lockquell, André Giroux, and Robert Elie. On the other hand, Jean-Jules Richard and Yves Thériault write in a more naturalistic vein. Richard's *Neuf Jours de haine* is a rather impressive narrative of the daily life of soldiers at the front, but although this human document does not lack force, it is much too shapeless to be a major literary achievement. In Thériault's *La Fille laide,* one of the most morbid books ever written in Canada, the characters are motivated by primitive instincts, they are obsessed with death and sex, and they live on the same plane with their physical environment, but they are depicted in such a way that they cast a spell upon the reader. Jacqueline Mabit, on the other hand, is a fine analyst of the feminine soul and *La Fin de la joie* is a penetrating study of some aspects of friendship between school-girls. *Les Elus que vous êtes,* by Clément Lockquell, is the story of a young brother going through a crisis in endeavouring to adapt himself to the strict rules of his religious order. *Au delà des visages* is another psychological novel of importance, in which André Giroux has described the psychological effects produced on a number of characters by the news of a murder

committed by a young man from a well-to-do family in Quebec City; his theme enables the author to reveal the ideas and prejudices, the virtues and the faults which coexist in human nature. Giroux is a fine satirist as well as a penetrating observer of his environment and his first novel is a pleasing blend of comedy and tragedy. The most promising novelist of the younger generation seems to be Robert Elie, whose *La Fin des songes* is one of the major French-Canadian novels. This tragic story of a misfit who puts an end to his own life for having failed to answer the basic question of the end of human destiny, is a novel of deep spiritual insight written in the classical French tradition. The light thrown here on the inner troubles of characters in search of their true personality reveals a novelist who is deeply conscious of the complexity of human nature. To recall one of the best English-Canadian novels, Robert Elie's narrative could well be entitled "Four Solitudes," for the four main characters strive apart to find out what life is and what makes this life worth living. *La Fin des songes* is a major novel; it is not only one of the few major French-Canadian novels, but it is one of the best novels of recent years written in the French language anywhere in the world.

In bringing to a close this rapid sketch of the recent development of the French-Canadian novel, a few general remarks would seem to be in order. First, we must recognize that we have not yet produced any novelist of universal stature such as Balzac, Dostoievski, or Dickens. But we must also recognize that we now have a few novels which, with a few poems and a few other books, constitute a French-Canadian literature. Notwithstanding its shortcomings, this survey indicates, I hope, that French-Canadian letters are coming of age and that they can enrich English-Canadian culture just as the best English-Canadian books can enrich them.

At a time when the world is threatened with a conflict which would be many times more dreadful than the one from which we have just emerged, men of goodwill sense the greater and greater need of sincere collaboration between nations to assure not only peace but the progress of civilization and culture. Nothing is more urgent than the most intensive interchange of ideas and opinions between people of all nations. Such a need applies on a domestic front in a country like ours where two cultural groups live side by side. Exchanges can take place in various ways: interprovincial meetings, bilingual magazines and papers, the translation of the better works of one language into the other, and close co-operation between people working in the same field, whatever may be their racial origin. While material

interests can divide nations and, within a nation, various groups, the higher interests of culture and civilization can lead to a mutually respectful unity amid legitimate diversity. In Canada, natural meeting ground of Anglo-Saxon and French cultures, it is altogether fitting that any movement towards *rapprochement* should be greeted with enthusiasm and firmly supported. Occupying a common territory and sharing almost two centuries of common history, our two cultural groups should know one another much better than they do. If personal relations remain the most effective means of understanding and friendship, knowledge of the literature of the other group is an important auxiliary. A country which has inherited the culture of Shakespeare and of Racine would be ill advised to repudiate either, and a better knowledge by each group of the literature of the other could have only happy results towards the achievement of national unity. Such a knowledge, we must confess, has been limited for too long to too few of us. We should read Frederick Philip Grove and Ringuet, Morley Callaghan and Gabrielle Roy, Mazo de la Roche and Germaine Guèvremont, Philip Child and Roger Lemelin, Hugh MacLennan and Robert Elie; they are interpreters of our ways of life, of our traditions and aspirations, and they speak for all of us. Whether they write in the English or French language, they are Canadian authors and they are the common possession of all Canadians from coast to coast.

ROBERT BROWNING AND MRS. PATTISON: SOME UNPUBLISHED BROWNING LETTERS

W. H. G. ARMYTAGE

NO ONE took greater measures of protection against the probings of posterity than Robert Browning. Unfinished poems, personal letters, anything that might betray his personal inner life, he ruthlessly destroyed. Indeed, when T. J. Wise, his bibliographer and acolyte, first met him in 1884, he was "dipping into" an old leather trunk and burning his early poems and some letters from Carlyle. From that time, till Thurman L. Hood published his edition of Browning correspondence forty-nine years later,[1] letters of the poet have been bobbing up in many places. More have been published since Thurman Hood's collection, each adding its quota to knowledge of his life.[2]

One correspondent of Robert Browning who is not mentioned either by Wise or Thurman Hood was Mrs. Emily Pattison. Emilia Pattison (née Strong) was twenty-eight years younger than Browning. She had married Mark Pattison, the well-known literary historian, in 1861, the year he became Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford. Pattison was then forty-eight and she twenty-one. Six years after her marriage, she became a victim of certain nervous disorders. Mrs. Pattison was an artist interested in the history of art—a subject which she had studied as a girl at South Kensington. She is generally agreed to have been the original of Dorothea in *Middlemarch,* which was published during 1871-2, at the time this correspondence got under way.[3]

It was her illness that drew Browning's first letter to her. Dated December 30, 1867, it was written from the Athenaeum Club. Brown-

[1] *Letters of Robert Browning Collected by Thomas J. Wise,* ed. with an introduction and notes by Thurman L. Hood (London, 1933).

[2] *Intimate Glimpses from Browning's Letter File,* assembled by A. Joseph Armstrong (Waco, Tex., 1934); *Twenty-two Unpublished Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browing and Robert Browning, Addressed to Henrietta and Arabella Moulton-Barrett* (New York, 1935); *Selections from the Letters of Robert Browning,* by W. R. Benet (London, 1935); *Robert Browning and Julia Wedgwood,* ed. Richard Curle (London, 1937); *New Letters of Robert Browning,* ed. W. C. DeVane and K. L. Knickerbocker (New Haven, Conn., 1950); W. H. G. Armytage, "Some New Letters of Robert Browning, 1871-1889," *Modern Language Quarterly,* XII, 155-8; *Dearest Isa: Robert Browning's Letters to Isabella Blagden,* ed. Edward C. McAleer (Austin, Tex., 1951).

[3] She later married Sir Charles Dilke (1843-1911), three years her junior, and was his faithful companion in the political disaster which afflicted him in 1886. She published *Art in the Modern State* (London, 1888) and further books on French artists and sculptors. A year after she died, Sir Charles Dilke published a memoir of her as a preface to *The Book of the Spiritual Life* (London, 1905) in which he mentions Browning's correspondence. The correspondence, thirty-three letters from Browning to Lady Dilke, is now among the Dilke Papers in the manuscript room of the British Museum. The letters are catalogued as B.M. Add. MSS 43913 ff. 60-71, 73, 76-81, 85-94, 98-99, and 102.

ing, after six years in London, had begun to take root there once more. He called to pay his respects; not being able to see her, he wrote:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

It is very good of you to be at the trouble of writing. I happened to hear you were in town, and—I grieve to know—not well: I could not but be solicitous to enquire for myself. All I want to say is—that I shall certainly venture to call again—and, as certainly, feel hurt and disappointed in your kindness if you make the least scruple of declining to see me a dozen times in succession,—I shall understand it and try again, be sure!

All my associations with the sight of you have been pleasant indeed—let me fear nothing otherwise from the year just about to come, and wish you well in every sense!

Pray believe me,
Dear Mrs. Pattison,
very sincerely yours,
Robert Browning.

There was a gesture on the part of Mrs. Pattison. Photographs were sent, and in an undated letter, Browning replied from 19 Warwick Crescent.

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

I am very grateful to you for your gift of the Photographs: certainly I keep both, since you permit me. I don't say they were satisfying—even good—but I am very glad to have them all the same.

I feel more than sorry that I could not see you, as I had hoped, during your stay in town. I wish I had made an effort, and overcome, no matter what amount of obstacle, to see you again.

Besides, I supposed you had engagements of your own, from something you said, which I should thwart. Do forgive all misapprehension, or any, on this point, by which I only am the sufferer: and let me myself make amends next time, pray!

Ever yours most truly,
Robert Browning.

From 1871, the correspondence becomes regular. It was a prolific period for Browning: *Balaustion's Adventure* and *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* were published in this year, followed by *Fifine at the Fair* the following year, and *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country in* 1873. On Boxing Day, 1871, Browning wrote from 19 Warwick Crescent:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

I was specially glad and grateful at hearing from you, because an earlier letter, addressed to me here when I was absent, remained unanswered in consequence of my supposing, when I returned, that it was your turn to be far and away. I only heard very lately that you were at

Oxford instead of Palermo or thereabouts. It will be a further subject for gratitude if, when you visit London as you engage to do, you kindly apprise me and give me leave to call. I hope to stay at home for many a quiet month now.

What was it that Mr. Colvin said in the 'Fortnightly' by which you conjecture I must have mended my ways? I only recollect some animadversions on the heinousness of bowing to the ground in compliment to an exceedingly pretty sample of sweet and twenty: I hope that he says never, in promising to pay his tailor's bill at the earliest opportunity, that he remains his obedient servant.[4]

Why last week a prize show American lady—oil cake fed?—observed to me "Wal I never! Here's Mr. So-and-So been calling me a colibri, a humming bird, fancy!" Whereto I, as in duty bound, replied, "Instead of bird of Paradise, as I should have done"—and was rewarded with an "Oh My!" which grinned from ear to ear, no inconsiderable distance. "Yet was not this knight forsworn."

As for news I have none. We are all reading the "Life of Dickens" and admiring his sensitiveness at having brushed shoes and trimmed gallipots in his early days, when, did he see with the eyes of certain of his sagest friends,—it was the best education imaginable for the likes of him. Shall I versify?

> In Dickens, sure, philosophy was lacking,
> Since of calamities he counts the crowning,
> That, young, he had too much to do with Blacking;
> Old, he had not enough to do with ———

Yours ever truly,
R.B.

I am concerned to hear that the Rector's health is still unamended materially. Pray offer my best respects and regards to him.—In *the dark* which must excuse haste and scrawling.

Three months later, on March 15, 1872, he wrote again:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

Thank you exceedingly for your letters: I can tell you little about myself that you do not know or imagine, if you please to do this last. There will be rest for us all at Easter. I have really to tax my memory to remember where I was the day before yesterday—much more anything worthy record or worthy your notice that happened: There was a crowd at Lady Margaret's, a pleasant dinner at Colvin's, I was not able to get to Mrs. Grant Duff's,[5] and that's -a -l -l.

I work in the mornings and am just at the end of my lily perfumed

[4]Sidney Colvin (1845-1927) was, like Mrs. Pattison, an art critic. Two years after this letter was written he became Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge. He wrote for the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Portfolio*.

[5]Slight, gentle, astigmatic Mountstuart Grant Duff (1829-1906) was then Under Secretary of State for India. His houses at Hampton, York, and Knebworth were rendezvous for many of the literary lions of the time. The fourteen volumes of his *Notes from a Diary* are a rich quarry for students of nineteenth-century life.

penance. Tonight,—let's see—I dine with the Leightons,[6] tomorrow the Ripons,[7] next day comes Benzon,[8] then a dinner of my little own. Monday takes me to Madme. Du Gueires' first time this season, after many failures, Wednesday to Lord Belper's,[9] and Oh, clash out a great chord from your violin and silence all this unprofitable chatter! Do you want, however, to know especially how every one of the above regales went off? Write, Madam, and your servant shall do his best and answer.

But the sober truth is that he cares more for one leaf of the lily, now before him, than, than—this inevitable breakdown in his comparison—he can't join on anything to this particular "than," and can only hope that you will help him![10]

The boy seems himself again—goes for a month to Scotland with Benzon who good naturedly invites him. The Memmel runs through Benzon's grounds and "falls" close by. Do you go there?

Tell me if I direct my letters properly. Good-bye, and believe me,

ever yours truly,
R.B.

I am glad indeed at the prosperity of the Paris Soir article—that's right! Do you ever get the American "Atlantic Monthly." There is a funny parody in the January number of my things—four parodies of them indeed—which might amuse you—an article called "The Echo Club" I should surmise by Lowell. I had it here a month without noticing it.

Four days later he was sending her a copy of *Fifine at the Fair*:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

As you won't tell me positively that my letters are properly addressed, and as, in consequence, I can't be certain that they don't risk going astray, I am forced very unwillingly to find it impossible to send you that long

[6]Frederick Leighton (1830-96) was another painter. He designed the tomb for Elizabeth Barrett Browning that was erected in Florence. He had been made a member of the Royal Academy in 1869, and became its President nine years later.

[7]The Marquess of Ripon (1827-1909) was then Lord President of the Council. A year later he resigned, and was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

[8]The Benzons lived in Kensington Park Gardens. Ernest Benzon had also had Browning to stay with him at Little Milton above Loch Tummell, during the previous summer. Browning's son went there in the summer of 1872.

[9]Lord Belper (1801-80), a survival of a preceding generation—he had been the friend of the Mills and Macaulay—was an authority on politics and education.

[10]It is interesting to note that he evidently cared very much for the lily then before him: it is mentioned four times in *Fifine at the Fair*. "Do you account i' the lily, of the lands which travellers know?"; "o' the lily, mark her wealth and manifest her pride"; "her thanks instead of blame, (did lily only know)"; "by thus constraining length of lily, letting snow." In a letter which he wrote to Mrs. Pattison on March 6, 1872 (printed by Sir Charles in his preface to *The Book of the Spiritual Life*, 37-8) Browning wrote:

"Yes—I prefer the Japanese Lily to all the flowers in the world—for beauty, for odour, for all a flower can possess: though I may have liked violets well enough in my time: but, as Cleopatra says, the time was of 'my salad days when I was green in judgment.' I have such a Japanese Lily in my room with me, at present, that the poor violets you glorify have no chance! And I bid you good bye, only to go and get full of its wonders."

extract from my newest poem which otherwise I should certainly inflict upon you, but which I am chary of letting go loose—so by your leave, and probably to your advantage, tied up it shall be.

Next, I am sure if you don't care to have the particulars of my "regales" I am as little solicitous of racking my brains to find in what odd corners they may be hiding: for, honestly, I forget all about them the very next day, as regularly as next day comes round.

My dinner was given to two old friends, females Milsand and Nettleship (not your's).[11] At last night's entertainment there were some three womenkind, Kinglake, Mowbray, Morris,—somebody—nobody. Johnny Oglu, Milsand and there an end. But yesterday afternoon there was a quantity of the best Joachim, for asking, at Leighton's with interspersion of Miss Regan and Miss Zammerman—and some forty people played audience to what was worth their best attention. I never heard Joachim play better—for *his* part of the performance.

Now please make haste and come: for, do you know, I am obliged to leave town for a whole Easter week through a stress of circumstances past my power to oppose.

So if your goodness continue, I am to have the very first of you when you arrive on the 26th or do you anticipate the day by any good chance? You must tell me you know. Here comes Milsand[12] to take me away to—no Bodleian—but an artist's studio. Goodbye dear Mrs. Pattison! The extract from the poem (that portion about the lily) begins—but I won't be tempted!

Yours,
R.B.

Then, three days after:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

You don't understand, or won't, that my address to the flower was unwritten, like the best things in the world. And also you don't or won't understand that "stress" with me means "stress" and nothing short of it, as you will say when you know. One can't tell where an unwary promise may be lurking to leap out on one of a sudden: and I'll engage that had I come out of the creature's clutches with no particular damage beyond a finger snapped off, it would, all the same, have happened that you come to town "on the 8th" by which time I shall be back as if nothing had happened!

ever yours truly,
R.B.

Six weeks later, on the 8th of May, he was writing with a different address:

[11]The Nettleships were John T. (Browning's friend) and R. L. (Mrs. Pattison's friend, the Oxford classical scholar). These were their wives or daughters whom Browning entertained.

[12]Milsand, a constant friend and counsellor of Browning's, is mentioned frequently in his correspondence.

Dear Friend,

True thanks for your kind wishes—though they come today and should by right have found me yesterday—but such flowers don't die at once, and I shall keep yours I promise you. But what on earth have you done that I should "think harshly or resentfully of you"? Not I, by any imaginable means, dear friend, and I have been unreasonable or inadvertent if I gave you any cause to fear such fancies on my part. I rather supposed at one time—so far is a fact—that we were much more of one mind about the matter that engaged me than afterwards proved to be the case, but "harsh thoughts and resentment" would claim "consequential damages" indeed! I believe you were quite right in your reading of our "Treaty with a view to an amicable arrangement"—so, I put it in the fire, and there's an end. As for our meeting in public, *that* you know is not at my power to manage: but when the lucky chance does befall me, I shall take every advantage of the meeting, depend on it.

But we go two ways in this world, nay, even in this town, and may not so readily cross each other's path as I once thought possible.

Do you go to Pillochrie? My friends press me also to go there, and are hardly to be put off, though put off they will assuredly be for I have other projects. All this however is to be considered months hence—I go away for the Whitsun week.

Forgive the skewer of a pen with which I prick rather than write this scribblement; in haste too, for it is late afternoon.

Ever truly yours,
R. Browning.

By writing "But we go two ways in this world, nay, even in this town, and may not so readily cross each other's path as I once thought possible," Browning might legitimately be construed as wishing to cool the admiration of a highly strung cultured woman, to whose enthusiasms he had already contributed. Events, however, were too strong for him.

In the autumn of 1873, Mrs. Pattison became the art editor of the *Academy*. As such, she was a powerful person in the world of art, whatever she had been before. Her good words would materially affect the professional career of Browning's only son Pen, who was at that time studying at Antwerp under Jean-Arnould Heyermans.[18] From now on, Browning seems to make their paths cross. On April 11, 1874, he wrote from Warwick Gardens:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

I shall be very glad to call on you, but I hardly dare make an appointment and so encroach on your time,—knowing as I do how busily you employ it when you visit town for a few days.

[18]Robert Wiedemann Barrett Browning, then twenty-four, was a great source of worry to his father. He had not only failed to secure admission to Balliol, but, when admitted to Christ Church, had found the going too hard. As early as 1868 Browning had written that the boy "might want no end of money"; see Hood, *Letters of Robert Browning*, 330.

I will say however, that if I find you at six tomorrow, Sunday, it will be pleasant, while if you happen to be away, it will not surprise or at all inconvenience me—pray understand.

ever, dear Mrs. Pattison,
yours very truly,
Robert Browning.

Pen is getting on exceedingly well—but I will tell you, if I have the good fortune to propose a convenient time.

A month later, on May 4, he was more explicit.

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

It is kind of you indeed to give me yet another occasion of seeing you before you go away. May it be on Thursday May 7 next at five o'clock? I hope to have no engagement for that evening, and need not care about the minutes preliminary.

I am just returned from the Academy: you are probably there at the moment. I want to bespeak your notice for a picture by Pen's master Heyermans, No. 658. The modest painter is happy at its reception, and his wife and mother cried for joy. Pen was the cause of his painting and exhibiting the picture, and I should like you to be interested in the man who is doing his best for me: will you please?[14]

ever yours,
R. Browning.

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

Would it be just the same thing if I called on you *tomorrow* (Tuesday) at 5 o'clock instead of Thursday? I should be less absolutely bound to abridge the visit you permit me to pay. You must not be at the least inconvenience through such a piece of self seeking—so if your own engagements for Thursday claim you otherwise, let my call be made on the day first fixed and believe me,

Ever yours truly,
R. Browning.

Thank you heartily for Heyermans.

Both the above letters bear the same date. The inference is that Browning sent the second to correct the first, and, noticing that she had approved of Heyermans' picture (probably through the evening newspapers), tagged the postcript thanks.

On June 13, his thanks were warm, and he thawed still more.

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

I was quite sure that you had done what you could for the picture. There was a very good notice of it in last week's *Athenaeum,* by whoever is the critic there; nobody that *I* know—and others may crop up in consequence elsewhere as is the way with the growth of that beneficial plant "for the healing of the nations." Thank you for the other kind word and possible purchasers; he has had an offer, I know.

[14]Heyermans painted a portrait of Pen at work in the studio at Antwerp.

Yes, the news from Pen continues to satisfy me and surprises me too. He has been steadily at work for above four good months on drawing outlines only. My poem is progressing as it pleases the Gods and don't please the public[15]—for unlike the redoubtable Simeon Solomon, I never "communicate in both kinds" if you remember his facetious speech of two years ago.

I was startled seeing the address heading your letter, for I fancied I saw you a constant visitor at Halle's as lately as last week: and only yesterday began a doubt in my mind as to the fact; so I am blinder than I supposed, and Halle has a patroness worth enquiring about. [Remainder torn.]

After a visit to the Continent in the late summer and autumn of 1874, Browning returned home in November and on the 18th wrote a reply:

Dear Friend,

I have just returned after a longer absence than usual—I hope you will have guessed that such could be the only reason for delaying so long to reply to the many kind things in your letter.

I send you two notes which I find here, and the reply to a letter which I wrote on seeing the advertisement in the *Times*—please let me have them again. I have not been able to hear more than that Mrs. Proctor[16] will leave the house and take an appointment in Kensington—near the Thackerays, I think.

If I can, I mean to call today—a sad business. Since my absence I have lost seven intimates, more or less,—it seems boastful to describe them as friends—for who has so many? Poor Dilke wrote a word to me also—much after the style of the communication to you.[17] But the worst is that of dear Edward Twistleton.[18]

As for Pen, I spent the end of last week with him at Antwerp, and, as you know I could blame him energetically enough on occasion, you will believe me now: he is doing his *utmost* and showed such an amount of work—three months' work—in proof of it, as made his master's representation quite trustworthy that "all he needed to do was—not to study so much," his progress is proportionable. He leads the quietest of lives, and satisfies me in every respect. Heyermans told me he never had such a pupil, nor met with "plus de dispositions"; it seems too good to be true no doubt.

[15]Presumably *The Inn Album*, published the following year.

[16]Bryan W. Proctor had died on October 4, 1874, at the age of eighty-seven. His amiable disposition endeared him to Byron who had immortalized him as "my gentle Euphues" (*Don Juan*, XI, lix). The year before he died, he and John Forster (the friend of Landor and Dickens) edited Browning's works. Bryan Proctor is perhaps better known as Barry Cornwall.

[17]Dilke's first wife had just died; it is ironic that Browning should be writing to the person who was to be his second.

[18]Edward Turner Boyd Twistleton died on the day after B. W. Proctor, though twenty-two years younger. His great work as a civil servant did not prevent him from rendering important service in the world of letters. *The Tongue Not Essential to Speech*, published in 1873, was his last book.

Heyermans is a far more admirable painter than you have means of supposing: I saw three pictures of quite perfect execution, and a cartoon—which at my earnest entreaty is to become a picture by the Spring—which will show you whether this modest little-appreciated man need fear Israels or his like. He is still young, but lives solitarily with his wife and children! I am abundantly grateful to them.

Lastly, "your congratulations which you are told you may offer me." I was always found dull at sympathy with "jokers"—rarely being able to distinguish them from liars and fools—so I can't laugh back my acknowledgements to the "teller" as most people would. Why this nonsense is stuck upon me again and again I can't imagine.[19] To be sure some walls seem most appropriate to placard posters, and I may prove just the person for these reports. I have no notion *who* is *who* in this instance: pray be assured that I have "found what is well and wise for me," and though *that* is not precisely what you were told to congratulate me about, it *is* nevertheless what you *may* felicitate me upon so long as you are my friend and I am (besides being yours affectionately)

Robert Browning.

In 1875 Browning was composing *Aristophanes' Apology*. He mentioned the poem to Mrs. Pattison and she expressed a desire to see it. On March 30, 1875, Browning replied:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

You are good indeed to have felt any least pleasure at a visit which was so very pleasant to my sister and myself. Reflected light and heat no doubt! At all events, who knows but you may repeat the experiment?

I will speak to Smith[20] the moment I can see him—and suggest that he send sheets as you desire. My abominable cough has increased on me and keeps me all but to the house. Thank you again for all the kindness and sympathy past and present and, I trust, to come.

Ever yours truly,
Robert Browning.

[19]Browning's testiness on being teased is a result of the unfortunate episode in his life which was first revealed by Professor W. C. DeVane, who showed that the references in the *Parleying with Daniel Bartoli* to a "she-shape" that troubled the Duke had an autobiographical significance. In an article in the *Yale Review*, Autumn, 1932 (reprinted in Hood's *Letters of Robert Browning* as an appendix) the story is pieced together from a jigsaw of evidence. Apparently Louisa, Lady Ashburton, who in 1871 was a handsome widow, forty-two years old, accused Browning of having said that "the attractiveness of a marriage with her lay in its advantage to Pen" (Hood, *Letters*, 326). On June 9, 1874, five months before he wrote to Mrs. Pattison, Browning had written about Lady Ashburton to W. W. Story: "I see every now and then that contemptible Lady Ashburton, and mind her no more than any other black beetle—so long as it don't crawl up my sleeve" (Hood, *Letters*, 163). Evidently Mrs. Pattison had heard yet another rumour of Browning's remarriage.

[20]George Smith (1824-1921), whose acquaintance Browning first made in 1868, when Smith had begun to devote himself entirely to publishing. Smith, founder of the *Cornhill* and the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in addition to being Browning's publisher, was his intimate friend. Evidently Smith was ill at this time.

And six days later:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

I am sorry indeed that you should be ill—a far worse casualty than my "cold" which makes me ashamed by its persistence. It is kind beyond my deserts that you should care about my book in such a conjunction. I will go tomorrow for the *fourth* time and see if Smith be anywhere to get ear of: but I am afraid that Mrs. Smith is causing him great anxiety—at any rate he has been away for a long time. There are no advertisements nor signs of life. I will do what I possibly can for the *Appleton,* and if I had a single copy of any sort of proofs, would gladly send them—but I have nothing—just a few beginning at page 177—of no use at all.

I should naturally be glad that anyone meaning to criticise the poem had the time and opportunity of giving it fair attention. I happen to know that a book just out, was sent a couple of months ago, to a critic for such a purpose—yet never thought of such a proceeding in my own case.

Goodbye, get well, and hear Salvini, and keep your kindness warm for yours affectionately,

Robert Browning.

Mrs. Pattison was evidently a good proof reader for her scrutiny of the printed page detected an obscurity, and she wrote to tell him of it. Browning replied on May 6:

Dear Friend,

I don't think this particular little poem can be what we talked about; it was certainly not written in Paris, but on the road between Florence and Rome. Anyhow I see the source of the obscurity. I have treated a "day" as the complete period, the twenty four hours of day and night, and a night as half the time only—and by stupidly beginning with the night half and going on to the three day *wholes,* I confuse you, quite by my own fault.

Suppose in counting money I were to say—instead of "I have seven shillings"—"I have a shilling and three florins." T'were perhaps pardonable in a child who should lovingly finger one by one his store of coins,—glad however, that there were so many to spend,—while my man liked to think how few remained to burthen his pocket. There!

Yes, I took that theory of the reviewers for a good natured joke. The "World" next week declared that the whole setting of the play was a mere transcript from the conversation of Jowett, as the play itself was from Euripides. I have never set eyes on the master these four years about, nor foot in Oxford these six; and suppose that Jowett's notions and mine are as wide as the poles apart, if I had the chance of knowing them.[21]

Welcome to London in the fewest possible days and nights, and please let me profit when town comes.

affectionately yours,
Robert Browning.

[21]Benjamin Jowett (1817-93), the famous Master of Balliol, who in 1871 had published his translation of Plato.

Within three weeks, Mrs. Pattison had come down to London, and had invited Browning to call. Browning replied on May 26:

Dear Friend,

Nothing I should like so much as a quiet half hour with you. I waited for yourself to fix it—you are so variously and constantly engaged when in town you know. What if I say *any* time next Sunday you may please appoint by a line to

yours truly ever,
Robert Browning.

While Browning was spending the summer and autumn of 1875 at Villers-sur-Mer, Calvados, Mrs. Pattison fell ill. He wrote, sympathizing:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

It was kind indeed of you to write to me—very sad as it strikes me that your recovery from so painful an attack should be but partial and slow; you know you have my deep sympathy—I may truly say, my admiration, for your power of endurance.

At your age, it seems improbable, but, sooner or later, there will follow complete recovery.

I have been here these two months and leave tomorrow for London. It was a mistake to choose such a place, or rather, accept it by choice of a deputy. A Toyshop set of chalets, pagodas, and everything detestable in taste and pretension have spoiled an originally charming spot. I and my sister however, were well enough housed, and the one other resource,—beside the sea bathing, was the surrounding country, which is beautiful.

But I go away without regret and have no fear of returning. We cross to Havre—unless the weather, which is at present favourable, turns out unpropitious—and so avoid certain mild annoyances which a stay at Paris, long or short, would occasion.

I last heard of Mrs. Proctor as at Freshwater and well: I suppose she will winter in London, and I shall soon see her, and say as you bid me. Mrs. Orr is in London,[22] far from well. Of other friends I am ignorant. If you continue your goodness and write to me, I will duly chronicle whatever little doings come under my notice: I hope to stay at home for a long while, once arrived there.

On leaving London, I went to see Pen, who in the absence of his master was at Dinant—his progress is very real and his diligence exemplary; beside what I saw, Heyermans writes very satisfactorily about certain things of various kinds—large studies—he calls them capital. You will be pleased to hear this. My sister sends her kindest regards and I am still

affectionately yours,
Robert Browning.

[22]Mrs. Sutherland Orr, sister of Frederick Leighton (see note 6). She published a *Life of Robert Browning* in 1891.

With the New Year, came news of Mrs. Pattison's continued ill health and, on January 3, 1876, Browning wrote, rallying her:

Dear Mrs. Pattison,

This new year must not grow older and I all the while having your letter unacknowled [*sic*]—ending too, as it did, with the best of endings "I am getting well." So "get" for everybody's sake.

I dare say the weather is in pleasant contrast at Nice with our doleful sky and earth drapery. But were you here I engage you would find sunshine enough at the outburst of old masters that makes radiant the Academy today: I think the best exhibition we have had yet. Yes, London is the one all sufficient kernel—you must crack an ungainly husk to get at it however.

I hear too that you are "wanted" (in the Scotch sense of the word) at the other "Academy"; the printed one. No proper witchery is exercised so as to draw out the designs as well as the hearts of the wary painters, so that the public can't be told what Burne-Jones is about, or le Gros intends—can't so well be told I mean: Therefore again and again, "get well!" I ought to say in explanation of my delay in ascertaining (as I hope to do) whether you are doing so, that I caught and retained pertinaciously, a vile cold and cough which made me a housekeeper for some three weeks—and that I have only just begun to go out.

Pen is here from Antwerp with five "studies" as he calls them with proper modesty, all done in the last four months, really very satisfactory proof of his power, diligence, and progress. He seems altogether observant and retentive, and a companion told us that "his (P's) nose had been at the grindstone, all day and probably all night too, for months." And at Oxford they could not let "Don't care!" escape coming to a bad end—as far as they were concerned. That miracle was left for Millais' working. Well, I can't tell you the gossip I fain would, because I have seen nobody or his next neighbour.

Mrs. Proctor returned a fortnight ago from a visit to the Goldsmids, and goes today to St. Leonard's and she seems to be much altered in appearance, but the young spirit is unquenchable. The Lehmanns are reunited by the arrival of Frederick from America two days ago. Mrs. N. or your "Nina" is very well—and her sister very vivacious; I met them last week more than once; Mrs. Benzon is reposing after her toils, having "builded her house and slain her (Christmas) beasts," for all the world like Wisdom. I met Colvin on Saturday at the Academy-view. Oh, let me say how sorry I was to read the article on my poem by Mr. Symonds: I am sure he meant his best but he ought to know that it is not wise to show how "transpositively" a story *might* be treated, when it happens to be not so treated: I was sorry wholly on account of having been obliged to see bounds to his sympathy (which means "ability") which was comforting in its largeness when I experienced it last.

To counterbalance this disappointment, there is the Spectator, to which I have a steady antipathy, most of all when I get praised by it,—that now bestows its good honest hate on me—while I joyfully reciprocate. Oh the end of the sheet! and Oh the no-end to the good wishes of yours ever,

Robert Browning.

The last dated letter of any length that passed between them was written on August 15 of this year. Mrs. Pattison had written, pointing out some errors in *Filippo Baldinucci on the Privilege of Burial.* Browning and his sister were in Aran at the time, having tired of Brittany.

Dear Friend,

Your letter follows me to this place—where I am, with my sister, for the hot months—an experiment we tried in dispair of finding a novelty in Bretagne or neighbourhood.

I wonder that I only heard—saw and knew nothing of you in London—others did: why was I not among the favoured? But by favour all good things go. I am truly glad that you are decidedly on the way to get well, though the progress is slower than one would have, could wishing make the difference.

Your proposed six months loneliness in the Villa among rose-gardens and olive-grounds is tempting enough. I could pass the same time easily on Holy Island yonder—in its sole and single house and little space cleared from the mountain side all heather and wilding.

Yes, "who" should be "how," that is the printer's habitual carelessness. "how" is sent rightly to the press—then the word falls out by some accident—the printer picks up the letters and just asks himself—not the copy—what they may make. So w-h-o is as good to him as h-o-w or if a donkey were to be checked in his advance w-o-h![23]

To the printer are also to be attributed the punctuation brushed off the endings of lines—an accident peculiar to poetry whereby two lines coälesce to the detriment of the sense. But there were two or three strange faults—of rhyme—in the poem about the Jews—which are my own blundering—I don't know how. I wrote the thing while the earlier sheets were passing through the press, and did not read them *à tête reposée.*

Correct page 194 [aloft] "from bier" 213 [crowns] "crowned" 214 [disbursed] "unpursed." It comes of altering hastily without reference to the context—and the last sheets were corrected in haste.[24]

[23]The original lines (*Filippo Baldinucci,* stanza xi) read:

"At last, they will not brook — not they! —
Longer such outrage on their tribe:
So, in some hole and corner, lay
Their heads together — who to bribe. . . ."

They were altered in the later editions.

[24]*Ibid.,* stanza xvi:

"What flouting in a face, what harm,
In just a lady borne from bier
By boys' heads, wings for leg and arm?"

This too was altered in later editions as he corrected. See also *ibid.,* stanza xlv:

"Stay, dog Jew . . . gentle sir, that is!
Resolve me! Can it be, she crowned, —
Mary, by miracle, — oh bliss! —
My present to your burial ground?
Certain, a ray of light has burst
Your veil of darkness! Had you else,
Only for Mary's sake, unpursed
So much hard money? Tell — oh, tell's!"

My sister is sincerely glad to hear of you and hear pleasantly. And I wish you all health and enjoyment, as you know.

ever affectionately yours,
Robert Browning.

The correspondence flickers out after 1876: apart from a few perfunctory replies to dinner invitations. While it had lasted, Browning had betrayed himself into some observations that show his mood as he approached and passed the climacteric of his sixtieth year. In view of the fact that his self-revelations have been so deliberately destroyed, it is hoped that the printing of these letters will add another mite to such knowledge, thereby aiding the appreciation of his poetry.

On July 25, Browning had written much the same letter to Edmund Gosse (Hood, *Letters of Robert Browning,* 174), adding: "The punctuation — as is the way with printed verse—has been suffered to slip out of the endings, and confuse the sense in many instances. In *Numpholeptos* (p. 97) the 8th line should run: 'So grant me — love — whole, sole,' *etc.*"

The text I have used in the preparation of this note is the edition published by Smith, Elder and Company, of 15 Waterloo Place, London, in 1888, corrected by Browning himself and at present in the British Museum (catalogue number C 116 d. 1).

MILTON DAY-BY-DAY*

A. S. P. WOODHOUSE

The Life Records of John Milton, to be completed in four volumes, is not a biography, but "a source book designed to provide a day-by-day guide to the known facts" relating to him and to his family and associates. The first two volumes, now available, carry the story down to the publication of the *First Defence of the English People* in February, 1651, and enable us to judge the scope and method and probable utility of the whole work.

The entries are, roughly speaking, of five kinds: (1) statements in Milton's writings, either deliberately autobiographical (and quoted under the years to which in the compiler's judgment they refer) or revealing of Milton's activities and interests at the time when they were written, all of which are, of course, available in Milton's collected works, and many of which have already been brought together on a different plan in Professor Diekhoff's useful *Milton on Himself*; (2) statements by Milton's early biographers, all (or almost all) of which are available in Miss Darbishire's collection; (3) public records of various sorts, the class into which most of the new material in the volumes falls; (4) contemporary allusions to Milton, most of which have been already noticed by Dr. W. R. Parker and others; and (5) miscellaneous records of ascriptions to Milton, most of which are absurd, and of portraits which bear no slightest resemblance to him. The materials thus differ very widely in their relevance, significance, and utility, and in the degree to which they are already accessible. The last group, if included at all, might better have been relegated to an appendix, since they are facts of later opinion and not of the life record. For the rest we will confine our comments to the first category and the third.

Of the first-rate importance of all Milton's utterances respecting himself there can be no doubt. But much depends on the skill of the interpreter: one must know what allowance to make for the circumstances of the utterance or for the conventions of the *genre* in which Milton is writing, one must recognize his tendency, not to invent, but to simplify and emphasize in retrospect the pattern of past events, and one must be able to balance statement with statement; and interpretation lies outside the scope of a source book. Again, it is not always easy to determine where Milton is in reality alluding to, or

**The Life Records of John Milton:* I, *1608-1639*; II, *1639-1651*. Edited by J. MILTON FRENCH. Rutgers Studies in English, 7. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press. 1949; 1950. Pp. xii, 446; viii, 395. $5.00 each.

glancing at, himself. The lines in *Paradise Regained* (I, 201 ff.), uttered by Jesus,

> When I was yet a child, no childish play
> To me was pleasing; all my mind was set
> Serious to learn and know . . . ,

are not included; yet their memory of Milton's own childhood seems a great deal less speculative than does the relevance of much of the material in other categories which the compiler admits.

Interpretation apart, the value of the record depends, at many points, on precision in dating. In the works covered by the first volume (extending to July, 1639) there are vexed problems in chronology. All that one can do is to study and set forth all the evidence with care, examine critically the arguments advanced by the principal authorities, and reach one's own decision. This task the compiler does not altogether decline, but here he is at his weakest. His consultation of authorities appears to be quite haphazard. Of those scholars whom he has happened to consult he gives only the conclusions, none of the facts on which they are based. But what the scholar said is not evidence. The compiler adopts E. M. W. Tillyard's date for "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," but with no reference to him or his important argument on the dating of the poems. He ignores W. R. Parker's equally important argument for dating "How Soon Hath Time" in 1632, and adheres to 1631, and argues for an impossibly early date for the "Letter to a Friend." Most of the "Prolusions" he scatters at random through the years at Cambridge, without even the pretence of a reason for placing them where he does. Setting down "Prolusion 5" under April (?), 1625, he remarks: "Since there is no clue to the date of this piece, it is filed under this year for convenience." Whose convenience? Certainly not the reader's, who finds, to his embarrassment, floating items insecurely anchored at arbitrarily chosen points in what purports to be a strictly chronological month-by-month, and even day-by-day, record. No one will be so rash as to suppose that he can date the "Prolusions" or the undated poems with certainty. But a sufficient number of the early poems are dated to enable one to recognize the pattern of Milton's early development and to see where the undated poems seem best to fit into that pattern. Again, in the absence of all evidence to the contrary, it seems reasonable to assume that the "Prolusions" are printed in chronological order, and again one is not without indications of a pattern. This argument the present reviewer has set out in detail (*University of Toronto Quarterly,* October, 1943). It seems

to have made no more impression upon the compiler than the arguments of Dr. Tillyard and Dr. Parker.

Perhaps a third of the eight hundred pages go to reproducing at length all the public records, many of them discovered by Professor French himself, bearing on Milton, his family, and their associates. There are records pertaining to his brother and sister, to Charles Diodati, to the Powells, above all records of the business transactions of John Milton Sr. and his apparently somewhat dubious servant and partner Thomas Bower. The story of these last has already been told by Professor French in his valuable and impressive work *Milton in Chancery,* based on his researches in the Public Record Office. One is to remember, of course, that only such small part of the elder Milton's business is represented as involved litigation, and there is abundant evidence that, despite the impression of fairly sharp practice conveyed by the figure of Thomas Bower, he stood high in his profession. In some few of his father's transactions Milton appears to have been at least formally associated, and the decaying fortunes of the Powells furnish a grim accompaniment to Milton's matrimonial misadventures. One may nevertheless question how much the scrivener's shop really counted for in the poet's essential background.

It furnished the means of life and leisure, without perhaps intruding very much upon either. In his Latin poem "Ad Patrem" (as rendered by Cowper) Milton writes:

> . . . thou never badst me tread
> The beaten path and broad that leads right on
> To opulence . . .
> But wishing to enrich me more, to fill
> My mind with treasure, ledst me far away
> From city din to deep retreats, to banks
> And streams Aonian, and with free consent
> Didst place me happy by Apollo's side.

That Milton imbibed some of the principles and prejudices of the rising bourgeoisie, his political thinking would seem to indicate. In purely and overtly economic questions he shows no interest, but in politics he steadily supports the leaders of the Independent party, that is, the representatives of the higher bourgeoisie, "the middle sort amongst whom the wisest men, and the most skilful in affairs, are generally found" (*Defensio,* cap. 7) and who are either well-born or "tread the path to true nobility by way of industry and personal worth" (*ibid.*, praef.). But Milton's cultural inheritance was predominantly traditional and aristocratic, the inheritance of Sidney and Spenser. The bourgeois school in literature was still to be in-

augurated by Defoe, of whom there is no premonition in Milton. The interval between John Milton Sr. in the shop below—there is a good account of the premises in Bread Street in volume I—as he prepared to meet the suit of Samuel Burton in a matter of £200.0.0, and the poet in the parlor above, writing "Elegy I" to Diodati, is not to be measured by a few feet of wood and plaster; but when the shutters were up the scrivener was not entirely a stranger in his son's world, and they met in their love of music.

The essential background of Milton is the whole inherited culture of his age and the movement of those forces, social, political, and (above all) religious, which were to produce the Puritan Revolution. In his scope Masson was perfectly right. This is not to say that Professor French should have adopted Masson's generous conception, much less to question the utility of the book he has produced. To read it is to be brought into intimate contact with the daily life of Milton's household and with its passing (as well as with some of his permanent) concerns. It does not give us the whole background of the poet—or much, perhaps, except his own statements, that is indispensable for an understanding of him; but what it gives us is a body of indisputable facts, and facts are never to be despised. It raises the question, nevertheless, whether we do not also need a comparable record of the poet's age which should find its focal point in his known interests and attainments. But this would be a yet more formidable undertaking.

Except for the matter of dating noticed above, the compiler's work appears to be as painstaking as it is learned. Inevitably, there are a few slips, such as phrases (I, 404) perpetuating Milton's long-exploded attribution of the *Regii Sanguinis Clamor* to Alexander More (but see II, 88, where it is correctly ascribed to Peter du Moulin), or the statement (I, 94) that Wordsworth, who was at St. John's, occupied Milton's rooms at Christ's! The book is beautifully produced by the Rutgers University Press.

GEORGE BERKELEY* — R. F. McRae

Deism is one of the least interesting of religions, and the small points of the deist controversy belong now to the antiquarian of ideas. When Berkeley directed his attack on "Skepticism, Atheism and Irre-

**The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne.* Edited by A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop. Vol. III, *Alciphron or The Minute Philosopher,* edited by T. E. Jessop; vol. IV, *De Motu, The Analyst,* etc., edited by A. A. Luce. Edinburgh and Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd. 1950, 1951. Pp. vi, 337, viii, 264. 30*s.* per volume.

ligion" at the level maintained in his *Principles,* the result was one of the great classics in the history of philosophy. When he tried to meet those he so much hated and despised at the level of point-by-point controversy, as in *Alciphron,* his points are as arid philosophically as their points. Only on the infrequent occasions when he drops this method to develop directly a doctrine of his own does this work achieve the excellence of his other philosophical writings. The tone of discussion in *Alciphron* is set early with the question, "Would anyone in his senses give a fig for meditations and discoveries made over a bottle?" "And yet," Berkeley continues, "it is certain that, instead of thought, books, and study, most free-thinkers are the proselytes of a drinking club. Their principles are often settled, and decisions on the deepest points made, when they are not fit to make a bargain." If we are not to give a fig for the views of Mandeville and others like him, where, then, is the basis for decent philosophical discussion, and can the outcome be, as Professor Jessop maintains, a work of art which "stands supreme in the whole body of our English literature of philosophy"?

In the attack on Shaftesbury there is not only misrepresentation, as Professor Jessop allows, but also an attempt by Berkeley to make a fool out of a philosopher who, in moral theory, was his peer. Ethics was Berkeley's weak point, just as mathematics was Hobbes's. "The ethical portions of his writings," says Selby-Bigge, "might, to all appearance, have been written by Paley." Among the considerable achievements of the classical British moralists was their emancipation of ethics from a too theological preoccupation with sanctions as the motive to right action, and their denial that the divine fiat is the sufficient ground of moral distinctions. Shaftesbury made an important contribution to this advance, but Berkeley could see in it only "infidelity," and consequent upon it the growth of "corruption of every kind and new vices." It must have been the superior grace of Berkeley's style which lured Saintsbury into the astonishing judgment that "Shaftesbury, clever as he is, is thin and acid reading. To anybody who knows all the texts, his thought will never recover from the calm but pitiless examination of part of it given by Berkeley in *Alciphron.*" The examination is relieved by a delightful digression from direct controversy in which Berkeley presents the outline of a theory of art and beauty. It is one which should please the members of a certain modern school of architecture, and it shows the effects of his own special interest in that art.

Philosophy has often been linked with poetry, by some to disparage philosophy, by some to make the loftiest claim for poetry. If, however, in the age of the Enlightenment, philosophy was sometimes to be

found in its poetry, poetry was rarely found in its philosophy. But poetry is, I think, present in Berkeley's magnificent conception of nature as a divine language. *Alciphron* contains the fullest statement of it in Berkeley's writings. As in the *New Theory of Vision* it is given without reference to his distinctive doctrine of immaterialism. Of this omission from *Alciphron* Professor Jessop says, "Because Alciphron goes beyond Natural Theology to the defence of the Christian faith, Berkeley, it seems to me, with a fine scruple, did not think it right to rest the case for that faith on his own philosophy, all the more so as this had not gained acceptance." The scruple, unfortunately, seriously damages the argument. Berkeley had followed Locke in considering ideas of sensation to be signs—signs of natural objects, but he did not agree with Locke as to what those natural objects signified are. To Locke they were material substances. To Berkeley they were nothing but collections of ideas of sensation which are found to go constantly together; hence the relation between sign and thing signified was the relation between actual sensations and further possible sensations. This involved an important difference in the two theories about the nature of the relation between sign and thing signified. According to Locke there was a causal connection between the two. The thing signified acts on the mind and produces there an idea which is a sign of it. Hence there occurs a regular concomitance of sign and thing signified. For Berkeley there is no causal connection between the two. Ideas do not cause ideas. How, then, are we to account for their regular concomitance? If Alciphron had not been so inhibited by Berkeley's scruple, he would have asked why this regularity of the connection could not have been the result of material substances acting on our senses in a uniform way. On such a supposition, Berkeley's doctrine of natural signs would remain intact, but they would certainly not constitute a language, for no speaker would be involved. It is not enough to Berkeley's purpose, namely, to prove the existence of God, to show that sensations are signs; he must show that they are a language, i.e. imply a speaker. To do that he must prove the non-existence of matter, and it is just this which his scruple led him to omit from *Alciphron*.

The section on grace in the concluding dialogue presents a theory which is remarkable in the eighteenth century, though not in more recent times, for the radical fashion in which it interprets knowledge in terms of actions to be performed. The fundamentally pragmatic nature of perceptual knowledge was made evident in Berkeley's earliest published writing, the *New Theory of Vision*. *Alciphron* explicitly puts the abstract sciences in this light also. The subordination of science to

action had been a commonplace with philosophers from Bacon, Descartes, and Hobbes on. It was thought that the knowledge of natural causes, discovered in the sciences, could be applied in the sphere of action to the production of desired ends, and that inquiry should be undertaken with this practical aim. It was assumed that practical principles were to be derived from a logically prior set of theoretical principles. But, what is important, science, even if made to serve practical ends, remained essentially theoretical. The practical uses to which it was put did not affect its logical character in any way. At most these ends merely directed theory toward that which would be capable subsequently of useful application in the arts or in moral conduct.

Now, for Berkeley, there are no theoretical natural sciences which are logically prior to practice. The reason for this is that there are no entities or things in nature corresponding to the terms with which the abstract sciences deal. Physics, for example, speaks of the "composition of forces," but there is nothing in nature corresponding to the term "force." Arithmetic concerns itself with numbers; but a number is not a thing; only that which is numbered is. That is not to say, however, that these terms, and the propositions about them, in physics and mathematics are meaningless, for while they do not signify anything *in rerum natura,* they do signify modes of procedure in dealing with things. They are "theorems directing men how to act," "operative principles," statements, not about what is, but about what is to be done. But it is not only physics and mathematics which have this character. Berkeley also classifies along with them that part of revealed theology which comprises the mysteries of faith. The doctrines of grace and of the Trinity are "operative principles" to regulate our conduct. It is no matter that we are unable to form any idea of these terms—the theologians' "grace" and the physicists' "forces" are equally mysterious—for their meaning is not found in any idea but in a rule of action.

De Motu and *The Analyst*, which are contained in the fourth volume of the collected works, are close in some respects to the last dialogue of *Alciphron*. *De Motu* makes it clear that not all knowledge is pragmatic; there is one theoretical science, i.e. one science which is concerned with the nature of things and seeks their causes. That is First Philosophy or metaphysics, and Berkeley severely cautions against confusing physics with it. The confusion arises if we think that natural science explains the nature of things and their causes. It has, as we have seen, an entirely different function. The terms "force, attraction, gravity," for example, are found nowhere in nature. To think of them

as really existing entities is to invoke occult qualities. They are only "mathematical hypotheses," i.e. practical devices for "reckonings about motion and bodies in motion, but not for understanding the simple nature of motion and for indicating so many distinct qualities." "To be of service to reckoning and mathematical demonstration is one thing, to set forth the nature of things is another." One is physics, the other is First Philosophy or metaphysics. Berkeley concludes *De Motu* by saying, "Allot to each science its own province; assign its bounds; accurately distinguish the principles and objects belonging to each."

In *Alciphron* Berkeley had shown that "force" in physics is no less a mystery than "Grace" in revealed religion. In *The Analyst* he carries the attack into the camp of the infidel mathematician to point out the mysteries of fluxions so that he can demand, "With what appearance of reason shall any man presume to say that mysteries may not be objects of faith, at the same time that he himself admits such obscure mysteries to be the objects of science?" But going further he demonstrates an illogicality in the theory of fluxions and concludes with the question, "Whether it be not less exceptionable to admit points above reason than contrary to reason."

AUDEN AS EDITOR* — WILLIAM BLISSETT

Mr. W. H. Auden, as well as being a notable and for twenty years a very contemporary poet, has also unobtrusively exercised considerable influence on current thought and taste by incidental work as editor, reviewer, and critic. The appearance in 1950 of *The Enchafèd Flood,* a collection of quotations and numbered notions, the materials, perhaps, for a major work of criticism, recalled a number of other short pieces by Auden—a review of C. N. Cochrane's *Christianity and Classical Culture,* a notable essay on Shaw called "Fabian Figaro," one on Yeats, one on T. S. Eliot's *Notes,* and an early thing on I forget what great subject written in an amusing parody of the Wittgenstein decimal system. There is need of a collection, on the model of Eliot's *Selected Essays,* but it is to be hoped that Mr. Auden can be induced, at least in future, to fill out that lean, bare, skinny style of his, whose every economy is at the expense of the reader.

A glance back into the magpie's nest—the notes to *The Double Man* (1941)—reveals how many of one's major discoveries in reading, over the past ten years, were owing to Auden's busy mind:

**Poets of the English Language.* Edited by W. H. AUDEN and NORMAN HOLMES PEARSON. In 5 volumes. New York: The Viking Press [Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada]. 1950. Pp. xlviii, 619; xlviii, 556; xlvi, 622; xxxviii, 535; xlviii, 624. $2.95 each.

Cochrane's book is there, and Charles Williams's *Descent of the Dove,* and so are Jung and Tillich, not to mention Kierkegaard, Kafka, and Rilke, who were then only beginning to come into their own.

But there is another, more anonymous way of changing readers' minds—by compiling and introducing anthologies, and Auden has done a great deal of this. From *The Poet's Tongue* (with John Garrett) in 1934 to the new Viking Portable *Poets of the English Language* (with Norman Holmes Pearson) in 1951, he has presented the poetry-reading public with collections which show discrimination and enterprise in the choice and nimbleness and capacity of mind in the introductions. The *Oxford Book of Light Verse* and the Viking Portable *Greek Reader* do their jobs well, and only the Tennyson selection is of debatable value.

The *Poets* appear in five attractive volumes which are substantial without being ponderous. They combine admirably the standard poems and poets with undeservedly neglected works, the latter mainly medieval or American. It is pleasing to find *Anthony and Cleopatra* complete in Shakespeare's spelling and the whole of *Philip Sparrow* and *Everyman,* of *Samson Agonistes* and *Bishop Blougram's Apology.*

The introductions to the several volumes seem to be Auden's, though the division of editorial labour is not indicated except in a review quoted on the jacket: they have the qualities of his style and reflect his interests. The first volume opens with a short discussion of English metre, one of the high points of the whole job. The juxtaposition of Aquinas and Betjeman:

> Nobis datus, nobis natus, ex intacta virgine . . .
>
> Lonely in the Regent Palace, sipping a banana blush . . .

is Auden at his neatest and most engaging.

To swing at once to the other extreme, we are presented in the second volume with a set of jottings on tragedy, beginning with a contrast of classical and Elizabethan drama and concluding thus: "If Shakespearean comedy is full of a sympathetic joy which classical comedy excludes, Shakespearean tragedy, on the other hand, is more terrifying than classical tragedy. In the latter the curtain falls on disaster, but also on justice done and knowledge of the truth gained; whereas in the former the disaster, for the hero, is in vain. He has suffered, but without gaining any comprehension of himself or his action, and he dies in despair, damned." It is clumsy to make Greek drama "the latter" and Elizabethan "the former," but let that pass. Stronger indignation is in order. Here is a man of sufficient stature to write poems, if not doctrinal to a nation at least ideological to two,

learned himself and with learned associates, making a statement about Shakespearean tragedy which a moment's recollection (or, if that fails, a few hours' reading) would tell him is true for *Macbeth* and perhaps *Othello,* dubious for *Lear* and *Romeo,* exactly false for *Hamlet,* and totally inapplicable to the Roman tragedies—one of which he prints in that very volume as the sole example of Shakespeare's dramatic art.

When a writer is betrayed by a love of symmetry and pattern into a demonstrable error like that, we may be wary of his even more sweeping *Welt-und-heilgeschichtliche* speculations which are in their nature unprovable and lose much of their point and attractiveness if supported by evidence or argument. What, for instance, is gained by jettisoning the idea of a "Renaissance" simply because it has been crudely presented in school histories and then accepting *in toto* the myth of "five centuries of uninterrupted humanism" in the Middle Ages—oddly brought to a close by men calling themselves Humanists? Under this coating of fresh-as-paint faddishness, however, there is plenty of good substance. The discussion of the Romantic hero—prefigured in *The Enchafèd Flood*—is a case in point; or, more briefly, this brilliant *aperçu*:

> If every revolution can be represented graphically by a symbolic figure—the Papal Revolution by a twin Warrior-Priest, the Lutheran by a God-fearing paterfamilias, the English by a country gentleman, the American by a pioneer, the French by an intellectual—then the contemporary symbol is a naked anonymous baby. It is for the baby's right to health, not for the freedom of any person or class to act or think—for a baby is not yet a person and cannot choose or think—that the revolution is being fought everywhere in one way or another. A baby has to be controlled, it has to be indoctrinated, it cannot be told more of the truth than it can profitably understand, so the present revolution is authoritarian and believes in censorship and propaganda. Since its values are really derived from medicine, from a concept of health, it is hostile to any non-conformity, any deviation from the norm. It is precisely, therefore, the exceptional man, the man of talent, the man who works alone, the man whom the French Revolution liberated and admired, who has become the object of greatest suspicion.

GOETHE STUDIES* — H. BOESCHENSTEIN

Professor Viëtor's two volumes on Goethe, one on the poet, the other on the thinker, place considerably more stress on achievement,

**Goethe the Poet.* By KARL VIËTOR. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company, Limited]. 1949. Pp. x, 341. $6.75.

Goethe the Thinker. By KARL VIËTOR. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press [Toronto: S. J. Reginald Saunders and Company, Limited]. 1950. Pp. x, 212. $5.50.

Goethe. By ALBERT SCHWEITZER. London: Adam and Charles Black [Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited]. 1949. Pp. x, 84. $1.65.

on completed works or fragments of works, than on the process of achieving. They represent, among a score of serious Goethe studies published on the occasion of the recent bicentenary, the only attempt to discuss, as far as possible, Goethe's poetic creations and scientific writings with reference to some objective standard provided by the history of civilization. That this method works better for the pure scientist whose theories can thus be re-examined in the light of latest developments than it does for the poet goes without saying. Fortunately Goethe was no such pure scientist, and little is gained by culling the chaff away from his botanical, geological, meteorological, and other scientific endeavours because these find their deeper significance and their more than adequate justification in the growth of his whole being to which they so richly contributed. To do justice to the thinker, to a realm of mind transcending the precincts of scientific investigation, Viëtor, after making an exhaustive survey of Goethe's interests in the natural sciences, salvaging what he can and pleading for consideration wherever it is needed (Goethe had no instruments, no mathematics, no real grounding in exact techniques and above all, no great inclination for abstractions), sees himself forced to assemble evidence for Goethe's philosophy and wisdom from whatever biographical material, letters, diaries, and conversations, he can lay his hands on. In short, he does the obvious and pays no heed to any strict boundary line he might have wished, originally, to observe between the man and his thought.

Professor Viëtor faces the same difficulties, now multiplied, when he sets out to present Goethe's literary productions. The fact that seemingly objective canons have time and again prevented critics from making us conscious of the peculiarly Goethean lustre of his poems, plays, and novels may not, once and for all, disprove the applicability of such standards, though it would be difficult to define their nature; a mere word-index such as the one contemplated by German scholarly societies might perhaps be strung together without constant reference to the complexity of Goethe's inner and outer life. Viëtor, however, deals with literary creations which, in form and content, vibrate with personality. To exclude the latter from critical appreciation leaves not much more than an empty shell; genesis and gestation of Goethe's works go far in elucidating the essence of creativeness and help us to new insight into the origin and character of literary genres. Goethe supplies his own canon which we cannot afford to overlook.

Lacking an objective measuring-rod (for which he will be readily excused) Professor Viëtor, forgetting the austere promise of his preface, wisely reverts to the time-honoured practice of embedding every one of his analyses of a literary work in a welter of biographical details. But while these strands are accurately threaded through all the

many particulars of time and place, they reveal no evidence of a coherent design of Goethe's life, unless it be a very traditional one which, in all essential aspects, neglects the results of modern reflection on the structure of Goethe's mind. Hence the obvious unevenness and contradictoriness of Viëtor's volume on Goethe the poet. He seems to rush ever anew for succour into the meaning of Goethe's existence, and of existence in general, without possessing a firm enough grasp of such vital problems. More often than not one wishes that he had proceeded with his initial intention to treat of Goethe's works, and of nothing else, since to this task he brings a wide scholarship that is cognizant of the progress made by modern interpreters, and an eloquence of style that enables him to integrate the views of his colleagues with his own. Where he trusts the bolder penetration of others more willingly than his own, the dry discussion of works in chronological order is, on occasion, happily broken up by some spirited exposition, for instance of the *Wilhelm Meister* novels. But it is the chapter on *Faust* which has, more than any other, benefited by the author's open-mindedness to recent criticism. Here he makes a gallant and successful effort to induce us to experience first of all the interplay and metamorphosis of biological forces, and to dissuade us from a premature evaluation of moral improvement in Faust. Still, abundantly as such brilliant observations may be strewn throughout the book, they fail to converge upon a central theme and to serve a unifying vision. In most cases the particular work under discussion recedes, after a shorter or longer period of close proximity, into the distance of academic perspective. No wonder that in the end the poet suffers the same fate that is expressly meted out to the scientist; he too is made to appear as if he belonged to the past rather than to the present or the future. And since it is Professor Viëtor's conviction that Goethe displays in miraculous intensification all the best aspirations stirring between the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment, he is only lukewarm in elaborating his additional belief that Goethe can yet mean much to us.

Readers of Schweitzer's philosophical works know of his exuberant enthusiasm for the eighteenth century. Goethe as an associate of the Illuminati would be assured of his admiration even if he did not exhale the further fascination of one who, like Schweitzer himself, undertook to live fruitfully and ethically without worrying much about the riddles of the universe. The slender volume is made up of three essays, two of which were delivered as lectures. They testify to the author's courage—as early, or as late as 1932 he conjures up the Frankfurt sage against the brewing storm of barbarism—and show that even such an uncritical conception of Goethe's life and works as Schweitzer's (it is

in many respects a small-scale reproduction or anticipation of Viëtor's neo-classic statue) can yet be instrumental in strengthening us for a life of arduous humanitarian activities. But this is, of course, no valid excuse for perpetuating an obsolete tradition of literary portrait painting. A more up-to-date apprehension of Goethe will do much more for us.

THE DECAY OF POPULAR WISDOM* H. S. WILSON

The increasing disuse of proverbial wisdom is dismaying. Nowadays, if one says to one's children, "The burnt child dreads the fire," they either look blank or suspect a joke. The Victorians still had a proverb for every occasion, and those of us who had Victorian parents can still hear them: "Pride goeth before a fall"; "Wilful waste brings woeful want"; "Let patience have her perfect work"; "If you have a reputation for early rising, you may lie abed till noon." As present-day equivalents or substitutes we have practically nothing. A few, not many, of our advertising slogans are clever and pleasant to turn over the tongue; but we know that they are meant to beguile us, and even if they were worth repeating, they would be of no use in our daily lives. Our slang is too depressing even to think of—such banal figures as "on the spot," "behind the eight ball," or the laconic (and usually nasal) "And how!" "So what?" Our popular idiom is supplied from the comics and the movies, the radio and television, and has reached what must surely be the lowest common multiple of human intelligence—flat, dull, and inarticulate.

The reasons for this state of affairs are complex and doubtless significant of many different tendencies and influences that operate in very intricate patterns. It is not that our generation is stupider than its forebears or less anxious to do right. The causes are more indirect and less easily perceived. Some of them, however, are fairly obvious and may be listed: (1) the decreasing use of the Bible, and the corresponding neglect of religious and ethical instruction; (2) the increasing faith in the expert and the progressive, as opposed to the traditional, and the consequent preference for the specialist's jargon (or the colloquial smartness which apes it) at the expense of the pithy aphorism refined and polished by the use of generations; (3) the distrust of the old-fashioned, especially old-fashioned sententiousness (the perception that much of it was not simply prudential but also cynical, if not hypo-

**A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.* By MORRIS PALMER TILLEY. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press [Toronto: Burns & MacEachern]. 1950. Pp. xiv, 854. $19.50.

critical as well); the dislike of the pompous attitudinizing that it implied; our generation, the more perspicacious part of it, at least, suffers from a real dread of the overtly didactic; (4) the increasing disuse of books, on anything above the picture-book level—it used to be said that Pope was the English author most quoted next to Shakespeare, and it may still be so; we so seldom quote poetry, or indeed anything literary, that there is no ready way of knowing.

The age that regarded Erasmus's *Adagia* and countless lesser collections as indispensable storehouses of wisdom is now antiquity. No one today would think of collecting *loci communes* with the purpose of thus enriching his table talk or his writing. The age of Elegant Extracts is just as archaic, and perhaps we may be thankful that it is no longer the fashion to publish the "Beauties" of Ernest Hemingway or "Select Thoughts" from George Bernard Shaw. But it is a pity that the tried and simple "sentences" of our ancestors should be fading from us with the changing times—"A close mouth catches no flies"; "The shortest answer is doing"; "The pitcher that goes too often to the well, at length comes broken home"; "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings."

Without growing sentimental about the good old days—we are at least cleaner than our ancestors, and, despite our wars and other troubles, perhaps more kindly and humane—we may yet deplore our neglect of the traditional moral wisdom of the past, both for its style and its doctrine. Nothing can be more vivid than some of the age-old comparisons—"as hot as a fox," "as drunk as a fish," "to laugh in one's sleeve," "not worth three skips of a louse." Then there are the beautiful admonitory proverbs, "He is not far from amendment who confesses his fault"; "Silence is the best ornament of a woman"—the latter older than the generation of Pericles. And what could be pithier than "Fast bind, fast find," "Measure is treasure," "First thrive, then wive." Some of the older proverbs have become curtailed in the course of time. Everyone knows "The more, the merrier"; but how many are aware of its equally apt complement—"the fewer, the better cheer"? Many English proverbs nowadays require a commentary. Who but a student of English dialect could interpret "When bale is hext, boot is next" (a version of "When things are at their worst they will mend"), or "as much sibbed as sieve and ridder that grew both in a wood together" (said of one who claims kindred with the great)?

All these matters, and a wealth beyond the dreams of avarice besides, are set forth in the monumental work of the late Morris Palmer Tilley, who must be considered the most notable collector of proverbs in our time. His work extended over a lifetime, and the

present collection (which gives over 11,000 proverbs) is documented historically, after the manner of the *NED*, and incorporates not only Professor Tilley's own researches but also materials brought to his attention as an associate editor of the *Early Modern English Dictionary* at the University of Michigan. Besides the Dictionary proper, there is a bibliography of all the works used therein and two indexes, one for the important words appearing in the proverbs and the other (doubtless the most complete extant) for the proverbs used by Shakespeare. The book is not merely a monument of painstaking scholarship; it is a joy to look at and to handle, for its splendid format, and altogether one of the pleasantest things that have come in our way for a long time.

SHORTER NOTICES

The English Augustans: The Life of Reason; Hobbes, Locke, Bolingbroke. By D. G. James. London, New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co. 1949. Pp. xiv, 272. $5.00.

The literary reader of Mr. James's book will have the pleasure of discovering that these three essays on Hobbes, Locke, and Bolingbroke are, in their main intention, studies in the imagination. Mr. James's concept of the imagination is neo-Kantian. He thinks traditionally of the imagination as that faculty operating midway between sense and reason. Such an imagination may hold the image of experience, organize it somewhat in presenting it to the reason, and then finally, after the reason has done its best, keep that image as the symbol of an unfulfilled knowledge beyond the reason. Thus thing becomes image, becomes idea, becomes symbol. "The eternity of the ideas is imaged to the imagination in the symbols of time. . . ." Mr. James has thought carefully and interestingly about the imagination, and he particularly illuminates the tension belonging to the *ménage* of reason and imagination. In spite of the occasional domestic metaphor, this discussion is attractive as it makes its appearance in intervals through these studies, which are at once essays in biography, exposition, and aesthetic theory.

It is one of Mr. James's contentions that none of these English Augustan philosophers had a place for the imagination in his system of knowledge. Hobbes was contemptuous of the faculty that, in his pages, passes under the description of "decaying sense." Locke was somewhat kinder to the concept of imagination, and one may almost find in him the pattern of "sense: image: idea: symbol." But Locke's terminology was of no help in fostering a real language of imagination,

and his unfortunate attack on "Enthusiasm," added to the last edition of the *Essay* in 1700, exercised a harmful influence in circles hostile to rivals of reason. On the whole, though, Mr. James is fond of Locke, and his essay on this central English philosopher is calculated to enhance a reputation. Of Locke he says, "There is not in the history of English culture a more attractive person." But the reader will perhaps be even more attracted to Hobbes and Bolingbroke because of the author's sharp irritation with them as people and thinkers. Bolingbroke particularly is castigated for his want of sympathy with the high symbolic offerings of the imagination.

It is a second, and perhaps somewhat different, contention of Mr. James that the deficiencies of the Augustan Age consisted principally in a failure to recognize symbolism. "I shall argue that the chief lack in the Augustan mind is that it was not aware of symbolism. . . ." What Mr. James considers a want in that age may to others appear to have been its best advantage. Surely there is some pleasure now in looking back to a period when the prevailing intelligence refused to believe that man was importantly motivated by an imagery both obscure and sinister. Actually, of course, the philosophers of the Enlightenment told a great deal about matters relevant to modern symbolic systems. This is especially true of the English philosophers. To turn over these stones of rationalism is to find the modern age. Mr. James is not interested in turning over such stones. Yet surely the decaying sense of Hobbes, the associationism of Locke, and the positivism of Bolingbroke are matters which have built themselves into the solid symbolic present. Does Mr. James like the symbolic mind of his own time, really? Does he not (understandably) want imagination only on the best nineteenth-century terms? In the long run has not the reason been a better friend than the imagination to the Christian truth which Mr. James supports?

The title of this book in praise of symbolism and imagination is *The Life of Reason*. There are lives set forth here, and reason too. These lives are judged in terms of that Stoicism which Bolingbroke wrote about, and Locke practised, and Hobbes ignored. The pages on Stoic influence in the eighteenth century, which saw fifty-eight editions of the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, are frequently matched by other good reference to intellectual history and biography. One would name particularly the following as interesting topics mentioned or discussed in Mr. James's scholarly book: intellectual Paris in the 1630's; the humanistic influences on Hobbes, from Latimer and the Chatsworth Library; the Convivium at Great Tew; Locke's "well-tempered" predecessors and friends; the contemporary historians who

interested Locke; and, finally, Bolingbroke's great associate Harley as patron of English medieval learning.

KENNETH MACLEAN

Flemish Artists of the Valois Courts. By RUTH MASSEY TOVELL. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1950. Pp. xviii, 157. Eleven colour plates, 49 black and white illustrations. $11.00.

This handsome large volume, in an edition of 550 copies, is well laid out, excellently printed, satisfactorily supplied with appendices, notes, a good bibliography and index, and—most notably—beautifully illustrated with no less than eleven plates in rich colour, from the illuminated manuscript *Les Très Belles Heures de Bruxelles* of the early sixteenth century, and 49 black and white reproductions ranging from illuminated pages from the late thirteenth century up to a panel painting from the year 1436 by the Flemish artist Jan van Eyck.

The broad scope of the subject, which traces outstanding developments in the work of Flemish artists at the court centres of Paris, Dijon, Bruges, etc., within the period indicated by the illustrations, and the necessity of making a personal selection among the mass of material available, cause the modest author at the outset of her journey to listen and long for "the friendly tread of the angels." Her aim is to convey to others some of the interest and satisfaction experienced by her late husband and herself during years of exploring and enjoying treasures of the past, of collecting information, collating, and consulting. One senses the sincere and unpretentious lover of art at work here, who searches and selects independently, whose warm enthusiasm recreates living experience, and whose aim is not merely to accumulate complete historical data.

In the nine chapters of the text, Mrs. Tovell establishes first the general background of medieval Flanders—the happy combination of prosperous towns, trading centres for the entire world, with a resplendent, art-loving aristocracy, and a rising, immensely wealthy bourgeoisie—a suitable setting for brilliant creative accomplishments. We see Bruges, one of the most advanced cities of fourteenth-century Europe, with its paved streets, traffic jams at business hours, twenty foreign consulates, high esteem for noted artists, and the rivalry with its neighbour Ghent—a point on which the climax of the book is built.

The influence and achievements of the gilds can be seen in the stately procession of workers in gold, enamel, and ivory, the illuminators, sculptors, and painters. There is a most enjoyable section on the scriptoria and on the collections of precious illuminated manu-

scripts that formed the basis of Europe's great libraries. Famous names come to life from the royal House of Valois with its Kings of France and Dukes of Burgundy, its Goods and Bolds who made such advantageous matches with Flanders and elsewhere, and, above all, its Duke John of Berry with his seventeen glorious châteaux and his 300 treasured manuscripts, of which 88 are still in existence. From them come most of the illustrations in the present book, including the colour plates from the "Brussels Hours." The text deals in good detail with each illustration, tracing the gradual freeing of Flemish art from Italian and French influences, and showing how the fusion of increasingly independent elements, particularly in illumination and sculpture, favoured the rise of a genius of the magnitude of Jan van Eyck, court painter to Duke Philip the Good, at Bruges, from 1425 to his death in 1441.

In the final chapters, devoted to the great van Eyck altarpiece at Ghent and to a brief appraisal of the evolution of Jan's style, Mrs. Tovell marches boldly into the midst of one of the most fascinating and fantastic problems in the history of art—the problem of whether the marvellous galaxy of van Eyck works should be ascribed to the hand of one artist or of two—in other words, whether there was, or was not, a painter Hubert van Eyck, elder brother of Jan.

Julius S. Held, who reviewed this book for *Canadian Art*, feared that Mrs. Tovell's rather full inclusion of the "Renders thesis," demolishing Hubert as "personnage de légende," might prove of little interest to the "general" public. It has absorbed all the readers whom this reviewer has encountered, just as the thesis has rocked the world of art history since 1933. As in ordinary detective work the author's conclusion must not be revealed to future readers (and those who have already read Mrs. Tovell's will not forget it); it might be appropriate, however, to refer to the expert opinion of "M.W.B." in the *Connoisseur* (which took its side in 1933 and may just have its tongue in its cheek by now; but let us hope not): "Who, we ask, could have foreseen that the iron curtain that has screened off misconceptions of the Eyckian history would so soon be lifted sky-high by a Canadian University Press?"

Absorbing reading in an atmosphere of affectionate understanding, the intense pleasure of poring over the jewel-like brilliance of the beautiful plates, the opportunity to appraise the situation in the consternating controversy "Hubert versus No-Hubert," which is otherwise scattered in a dozen books and at least three languages—all this surely produces fulfilment of the aim that Mrs. Tovell set herself in her

preface, and all this likewise explains that sensation of pleasurable pride in this Canadian production.

NAOMI JACKSON

Tess *in the Theatre: Two Dramatizations of* Tess of the D'Urbervilles, *by Thomas Hardy, One by Lorimer Stoddard.* Edited, with an Introduction, by MARGUERITE ROBERTS. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 1950. Pp. cviii, 225. $4.00.

Dr. Roberts has performed an interesting, though not in the end rewarding, service in presenting three versions of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* prepared for stage production. Two of these are by Hardy himself; the first was made in 1894-5 and, though Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Forbes-Robertson had planned to produce it, was never performed. The second, made in 1925, was presented in London with Gwen Ffrangçon Davies in the title role. The third version is by the American playwright Lorimer Stoddard who adapted it for Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske in 1897, after she had rejected Hardy's version but had obtained his permission to commission Stoddard.

Both Hardy versions follow the novel's plot in straightforward fashion. Stoddard's version begins *in medias res* with Tess's meeting with Angel Clare at Dairyman Crick's. Her earlier history is recapitulated in the first act, a scheme that earned Stoddard contemporary critical praise for his suppression of the novel's "offensive" incidents. Stoddard injected melodrama by heightening the misfortunes of the Durbeyfield family, by making Joan articulately evil. He also injected comedy by expanding the rustics and by adding minor figures.

Dr. Roberts in her introduction presents an exhaustively documented account of contemporary opinion of the three versions and she throws thereby some valuable light on what was demanded of the theatre at the times these (and other versions) were presented. But she does not present a personal and convincing evaluation of the success of the adaptations *qua* adaptations or of the suitability of the project in the first place.

Though an absolutistic judgment on the plays undoubtedly lay outside the scope of her book, her project clearly answers these questions. In spite of Hardy's dramatic intensity, his emphasis on plot and action, these are scarcely the qualities that give the novel its stature. Some of these qualities are just those things that cannot be transferred to the stage—felicitous and telling descriptions of setting, the necessarily long sweep of its time scheme, its indefinable "atmosphere."

Further, Hardy's dialogue is scarcely the dialogue of the stage if, indeed, it is human speech at all. Nor does the substitution of stage tricks—as in the Stoddard version—make up for what is of necessity lost. Dr. Roberts has, therefore, presented what can be described as little more than *curiosa* of the stage and has demonstrated, at least negatively, the fascination of a book that led many actresses and writers into a vulgar pitfall.

MELWYN BREEN

America Faces Russia: Russian-American Relations from Early Times to Our Day. By THOMAS A. BAILEY. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press [Toronto: Thomas Allen]. 1950. Pp. xiv, 375. $4.60.

One of the remarkable features of our times is the great ease with which one can become an "expert" on Russia. Usually the journalistic profession supplies the bulk of these experts and one knows what to expect of them. But when a reputable scholar and trained historian, such as the author of the book under review who is Professor of American Diplomatic History at Stanford University, enters the field, one becomes more critical and less indulgent.

Mr. Bailey writes that he is "less concerned with diplomacy than with American public opinion regarding it" (p. 358). But it is surprising that while recognizing that "the information that we received about Russia was one-sided, warped, or completely false," he admits that he repeats "a good many lurid reports that were palpably untrue, without always going out of my way to emphasize their falsity." This is certainly a startling admission for a recognized historian, which he excuses with the statement: "In a democracy like ours, where public opinion is such a force, the truth is often less important than what the people think is the truth" (p. vi). This reviewer is still old-fashioned enough to believe that an historian's primary task is to seek and to present truth and truth alone.

Hence Mr. Bailey's many pitfalls. To begin with there are many historical errors of fact. It was not England and Austria who intervened to prevent Russian troops from entering Constantinople in 1829 (p. 38), but Prussia. Alexander I did not swear "a solemn oath" to respect the Finnish constitution (p. 169) nor did any of his successors (pp. 170, 171), simply because they were autocratic sovereigns accountable only to God and never did swear any oaths at their coronation. Nicholas II never approved a constitution which included "ministerial responsibility" (p. 206). L. C. A. K. Martens did not establish offices in New York City "for the purpose of opening trade

relations" (p. 248). He was the first Soviet ambassador to the United States appointed by Lenin, but was not recognized by the State Department. The United States was not the first among the great powers to recognize the Provisional Government (p. 232); it was Great Britain. The stories that during the First World War Russian soldiers were sent into battle without boots or guns to pick up arms and footwear from fallen comrades were not true (p. 230). Under the Tsars the Russians had shown relatively little interest in international co-operative ventures especially in the economic field, any more than they do now under the Soviets (p. 329)—simply because there were no such international co-operative ventures then. The United States did not enter "into a formal military alliance with the Soviet Union by the Declaration of the United Nations" (p. 289); it was a presidential declaration, and only the United States Senate has the right to make formal alliances. The Ukrainian proverb is not: "To murder a Jew is to remove forty sins from off one's soul" (p. 176), but: "To kill a spider, etc."

Mr. Bailey states rather illogically that "disquietingly large numbers of Russian-Jewish expellees were becoming labour agitators in the United States, and this development was regarded as a further black mark against the Tsarist regime" (p. 125). He also wonders "why American readers should have developed a strong taste for Russian novels in the 1880's" (p. 137). The answer is: because they were good literature. He also misspells a number of Russian and Polish names, among them "Count Romanzoff" (p. 19 note) instead of "Roumiantsev" and "Monsignor Butchkavitch" (p. 264) instead of "Budkiewicz."

Throughout his book Mr. Bailey uses none but derogative epithets and similes about Russians and things Russian. Thus Russian ships are "rotting" (p. 31) or "rotten" (p. 91). Russian furs are "smelly" (p. 31). Russian troops (almost always "Cossacks") are "liberty-trampling" (p. 31). Alexander I who died when he was forty-eight is characterized as of "advancing years" and suffering from "hardening of the intellectual arteries" (p. 35); Alexander III is described as the "nerve-shattered successor" (p. 119) and his son as "the nervous Nicholas II" (p. 205), although both of them were known for their calmness. Russo-American cordiality is "mush" (p. 108). The Tsar's ministers are "henchmen" (p. 113) or "lackeys" (p. 174). The Russian sovereigns are "dictatorial" (p. 13) or full of deception "after the manner of monarchs everywhere" (p. 348).

One could quote many more such gems of "journalese" in this unhistorical and thoroughly biased book, but these are sufficient to express a pious hope that Mr. Bailey will return to his own field and

leave Russia and Russian affairs to those more qualified and less virulent than he is.

LEONID I. STRAKHOVSKY

Noble Essences. By OSBERT SITWELL. London: Macmillan & Co. Ltd. [Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited]. Pp. xii, 324. $4.50.

This is the fifth and last volume of Sir Osbert's autobiography, a work which has been generally acclaimed as the most splendid of recent years. The method in this volume has been changed: instead of elaborate and continuous variations on a theme, we are given a series of character studies, intended to be particular illustrations of the period treated more broadly in the earlier books: and this change, while appropriate to the subject, seems to reduce the finale, which it was hoped would be a harmonious interweaving of all that had already been stated, to an appendix, a late ingathering of material.

But Sir Osbert writes admirably and entertainingly about the friends whom he has chosen to describe. We are given, among much else, a clear vision of Lytton Strachey watching from the crowd a religious procession through the streets of Toledo—"I beheld opposite . . . a figure more striking than any that had so far been exhibited . . . the lean, elongated form of Lytton Strachey, hieratic, a pagod as plainly belonging as did the effigies to a creation of its own"—and longer studies of Sir Edmund Gosse, Wilfred Owen, Walter Sickert, W. H. Davies, and Arnold Bennett. Though the volume does seem detached from its forerunners, and though Sir Osbert is not so skilled a worker in miniature as, say, Sir Max Beerbohm—whose recent sketch of George Moore is in a similar style—it is delightful in itself and an important contribution to our understanding of the period.

DOUGLAS GRANT

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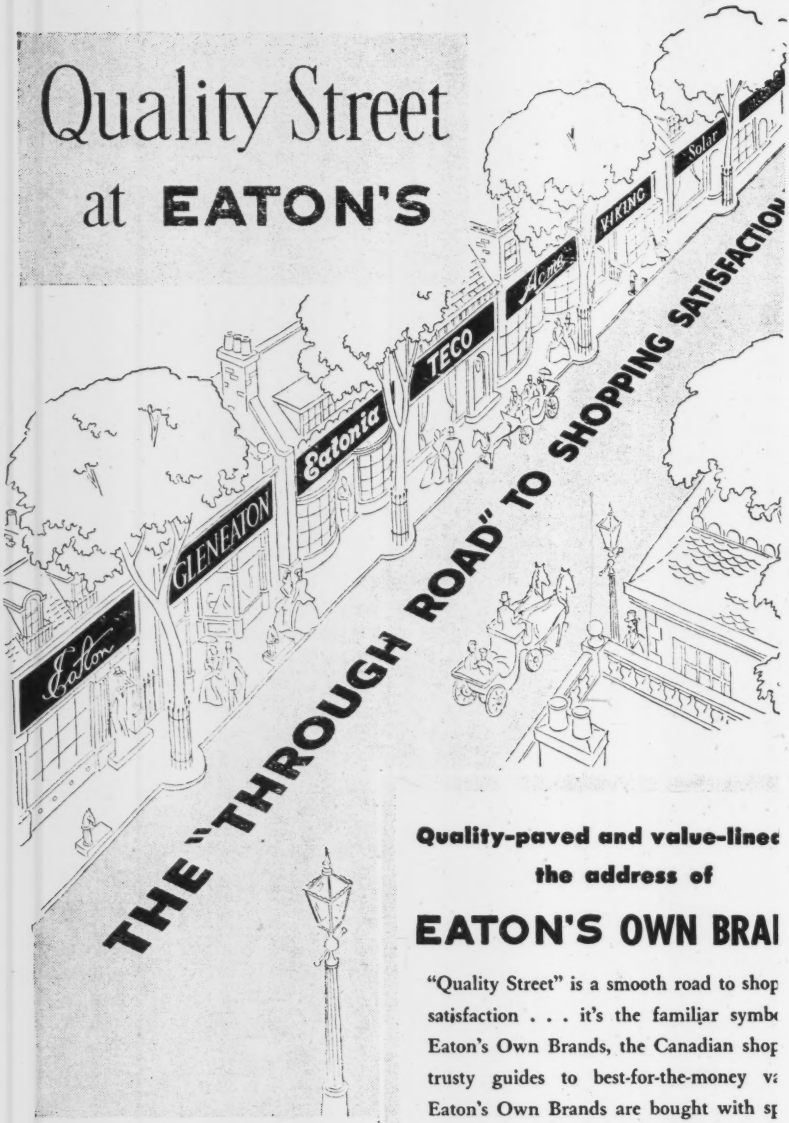

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